Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/worksofwilliamha07ains

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY LOS ANGELES

Henry was clasping the snowy fingers of Anne Boleyn and gazing passionately at her, as the Cardinal approached.
Frontispiece. —*Windsor Castle.*

EDITION DE LUXE

THE WORKS OF

William Harrison Ainsworth

Windsor Castle

A Historical Romance

Volume One

With Illustrations

By GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

THE NOTTINGHAM SOCIETY

NEW YORK PHILADELPHIA CHICAGO

102410

EDITION DE LUXE

Limited to One Thousand Sets
Printed for Subscribers Only

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES LIBRARY

CONTENTS.

VOLUME I.

Book the First.

CHAPTER PAGE

I. Of the Earl of Surrey's Solitary Rambler in the Home Park; of the Vision Beheld by Him in the Haunted Dell; and of His Meeting with Morgan Fenwolf, the Keeper, Beneath Herne's Oak..... 1

II. Of Bryan Bowntance, the Host of the Garter;—of the Duke of Shoreditch:—of the Bold Words Uttered by Mark Fytton, the Butcher, and how He was Cast into the Vault of the Curfew Tower..... 13

III. Of the Grand Procession to Windsor Castle;—of the Meeting of King Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyn at the Lower Gate.—of their Entrance into the Castle;—and how the Butcher was Hanged From the Curfew Tower..... 21

IV. How King Henry the Eighth Held a Chapter of the Garter; how He Attended Vespers and Matins in St. George's Chapel; and how He Feasted with the Knights-Companions in St. George's Hall..... 42

V. Of the Ghostly Chase Beheld by the Earl of Surrey and the Duke of Richmond, in Windsor Forest.... 56

VI. How the Fair Geraldine Bestowed a Relic upon Her Lover.—How Surrey and Richmond Rode in the Forest at Midnight,—and Where They Found the Body of Mark Fytton, the Butcher..... 61

VII. How the Earl of Surrey and the Fair Geraldine Plighted their Troth in the Cloisters of Saint George's Chapel..... 71

VIII. Of Tristram Lyndwood, the Old Forester, and His Granddaughter Mabel; of the Peril in Which the Lady Anne Boleyn was Placed During the Chase; and by Whom She was Rescued..... 77

CHAPTER PAGE

IX. By what Means Sir Thomas Wyat Obtained an Interview with Anne Boleyn; and How the Earl of Surrey Saved Them From the King's Anger..... 87

X. Of the Mysterious Disappearance of Herne the Hunter in the Lake..... 98

Book the Second.

I. Of the Compact Between Sir Thomas Wyat and Herne the Hunter..... 105

II. In what Manner Wolsey put His Scheme in Operation..... 118

III. Of the Visit of the Two Guildford Merchants to the Forester's Hut..... 127

IV. How Herne the Hunter Showed the Earl of Surrey the Fair Geraldine in a Vision..... 136

V. What Befell Sir Thomas Wyat in the Sandstone Cave.—And how He Drank a Maddening Potion.. 140

VI. How Sir Thomas Wyat Hunted with Herne..... 144

VII. How Wyat Beheld Mabel Lyndwood; and how He was Rowed by Morgan Fenwolf upon the Lake.... 148

VIII. How the King and the Duke of Suffolk were Assailed by Herne's Band; and what Followed the Attack. 153

IX. Showing how Morgan Fenwolf Escaped from the Garter Tower..... 164

X. How Herne the Hunter was Himself Hunted..... 171

Book the Third.

I. Of the Interview Between Henry and Catherine of Aragon in the Urswick Chapel; and how it was Interrupted..... 181

II. How Herne the Hunter Appeared to Henry on the Terrace..... 197

III. How Mabel Lyndwood was Taken to the Castle by Nicholas Clamp; and how they Encountered Morgan Fenwolf by the way..... 200

IV. How Mabel was Received by the Party in the Kitchen;—and of the Quarrel Between the two Jesters..... 206

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME ONE

Henry was clasping the snowy fingers of Anne Boleyn, and gazing passionately at her, as the Cardinal approached. ..... *Frontispiece*

PAGE

"Fair mistress," said the King, "I welcome you to this my Castle of Windsor." 39

"There!" whispered the jester, "there! did I speak falsely —eh!" 74

As the wild huntsman reached the brink of the lake, he placed a horn to his mouth, and blew from it a bright blue flame. 101

"If I were the royal Henry, instead of a plain Guilford merchant, I should prefer you to Anne Boleyn!" said the stranger 132

"Behold!" said the demon. And instantly a vision of the fair Geraldine shone forth 139

"Spare him, sire—spare him!" cried Mabel, rushing forward. 159

"Set fire to the accursed piece of timber!" roared the king— "burn it to the dust, and scatter it to the wind." 175

Startled by the sound, Henry turned and beheld on the parapet, the tall ghastly figure of Herne the hunter 198

Will plucked Patch's cap from his head and pointing to it cried—"here is an emblem of the Cardinal of York." 211

Windsor Castle

INTRODUCTION.

By G. Mercer Adam.

The theme of Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's present volume, following that on "The Tower of London," which may be called an historical counterpart of the work, is "Windsor Castle" during the middle period of the reign of Henry VIII. (1509–1547). It is the era when the kingly voluptuary, then in his thirty-eighth year, was in the toils of Anne Boleyn, and sought divorce from his wife, Catherine of Aragon, so as to marry the fair daughter of Sir Henry Boleyn, known later on as Earl of Ormond. The story as told by the novelist deals chiefly with "bluff old Hal," the king, who though popular was a despot, as many a courtier, besides his royal wives, were ruefully to discover, not to speak of those who in the movement of the time for a reformed religion and the break with Rome were to lose their lives, as the king's humor took him, by imprisonment, beheading, or hanging. Henry, when he came to the throne in his eighteenth year, in 1509, as the eldest surviving son of Henry VII., had all the advantages of youth, good looks, pleasant manners, and many accomplishments. To add to his popularity, the gay young king united in himself the rival claims of the houses of York and Lancaster; while to please his father and secure, as was thought, the friendship of Spain, he married on his assuming the English throne the Dowager Princess Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, and widow of Henry's elder brother Arthur.

The marriage with the staid and homely Catherine was a loveless one, though it lasted for over twenty years, during which she bore a daughter to the king in the Princess Mary, afterwards ill-known, when she came in turn to the throne (in 1553), for her persecution of Protestants as "Bloody Mary," and as wife of Philip of Spain, son of the Emperor Charles V., who was obnoxious also to the English. To Henry VIII., as we have said, his marriage was not a happy one, since as he grew older his strong will often broke through all restraints and he gave eager rein to his passionate and lustful nature. He moreover wished for a male heir to the throne, and hence, when he came under the wiles of Anne Boleyn, Henry besought the then Pope to pronounce his marriage with Catherine of Aragon null and void, on the ground that she had been his brother's widow. The Pope, being at this time in the power of Spain, temporized, and the king suspecting his ambitious Lord High Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, of thwarting his designs, he broke with both Pope and Cardinal, humbling and finally dismissing the latter, until Wolsey died of a broken spirit before he could be tried for treason.

Wolsey, who figures prominently in the novel, though of humble origin, was a man of great ability who raised himself to high rank, ecclesiastically and politically, and came to be at once courtier, diplomat, and administrator. He lived in great state, had a princely retinue, and under the king ruled for a time with almost despotic authority. In European affairs he exercised much influence, for he had unbounded authority, great talents for intrigue, and an intimate knowledge of statecraft. Great as was Wolsey's influence, Henry, however, was no puppet in his hands, as we see by his action in regard to both Wolsey and the Pope, but especially in regard to the former, when he broke with him, took away his offices, stripped

him of his wealth, and charged him with high treason. One happy result of this quarrel with the head of the Romish Church and its English representative, was to enable England to shake off the authority of the Pope and separate the Church of England from the Church of Rome. This was done by a series of assaults on Papal authority in England, by prohibiting the Pope from drawing any revenue from English benefices, and by compelling the clergy to acknowledge the king as Protector and Supreme Head of the Church. On the ground that they were improperly conducted, many of the religious monasteries in England were moreover abolished and their property and revenues seized by the king. This severance from the Roman Communion, which occurred in A. D. 1534, was not brought about without a struggle in England, though it had the countenance of Parliament and the aid of Thomas Cromwell, the king's Vicar-general, supplemented by that of Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury. The advantage that arose from it was not only the king's, but England's, which after Mary's reactionary reign, established herself as a great Reforming and Protestant Power. It also immediately tended to the aggrandizement of the king, and to the enhancement of Henry's power in Church and State, though it has to be admitted that the monarch cared more for his own authority than he cared for either Protestantism or for Roman Catholicism, while the religious differences of the era gave him the opportunity at times of showing his cruelty as well as his despotism. In State affairs, as all know, Henry had almost absolute power. Parliament, in the main, was a tool in his hands; it gave him, with two notable exceptions, all the money he wanted, and on one occasion it absolved him from his debts. It recognized alternately his marriages and divorces, and repeatedly altered the succession to the

throne to suit his whims. It moreover passed Acts which sent his discarded favorites to the block, and gave his proclamations the force of law. But Parliament, on the whole, gained by his rule, for the king's habit, particularly after the Reformation was launched, of appealing to it in aid of his measures increased its influence; while the withdrawal of the abbots from the House of Lords, owing to the suppression of the monasteries, increased, as historians relate, the power of the lay element, which in both Houses was more favorable to constitutional government. Henry's death (in 1547) gave Parliament an opportunity to recover some of its old authority.

Besides the king, the cardinal, and the divorced Catherine of Aragon, the novel of "Windsor Castle" deals with the Lady Anne Boleyn whom the amorous Henry VIII. secretly married in January, 1533. This lady, who had become the object of King Henry's attachment, was at the period one of Queen Catherine's maids of honor. Her beauty and her French airs and graces (she had been a resident at the court of France with Mary, the English king's sister) made her the reigning belle of Henry's court. Defying the Pope, since his Holiness had refused to sanction Queen Catherine's divorce, Henry, as we have seen, took his own masterly course, and though his act brought upon him the threat of Papal excommunication he married Anne Boleyn and got Parliament to pass an Act declaring the sufficiency of the English Church to settle it own spiritual questions, and forbidding all appeal to any court higher than that of the English Archbishop. In this, the king was aided by his vicar-general, Thomas Cromwell, who succeeded Wolsey, and by Archbishop Cranmer, who had passed the edict of divorce upon Queen Catherine. The divorced queen died at the close of January, 1536, and Anne Boleyn's triumph appeared to be complete. Complete for the time only it was, for in the

following month Anne Boleyn was disappointed in the expectation of a son, which Henry longed to have, his queen having previously given birth to the Princess Elizabeth.

At this period, having been supplanted in the affections of the king by Lady Jane Seymour, Anne Boleyn was accused of criminal intercourse with several gentlemen of the court, though she stoutly and consistently maintained her innocence, save for such "flirtation as might pardonably be expected from a lively young woman of French education at a not over-refined or puritanical court." The story of the storm that broke upon the unfortunate queen's head is graphically told by Ainsworth in the novel. It occurred at a tilting-match at Greenwich on May 1st, 1536, where the court was holding its customary holiday. During the joust of the tilters, Sir Henry Norris, a favorite of the queen's, had been the successful aspirant for the honors of the tilting-field. Elated by his triumph, Norris rode up to where the queen sat watching the tournament, to salute her Majesty and receive any favor from her hand which she might care to bestow. Anne, as the story relates, flatteringly acknowledged Norris's success as well as his gallantry and dropped Sir Henry her handkerchief, which had been the gift of the king. This was deftly caught by Norris and received as a love-token, much to the chagrin and anger of the monarch. Henry's annoyance was so manifest that he instantly stopped the tilting, left the field, and ordered Norris to accompany him to London. On the following day, Queen Anne was arrested by a guard and incarcerated in the Tower. Anne Boleyn was now speedily tried by a jury impanelled in the Tower, and, need we say it? was found guilty, though it is supposed on forged or lying evidence, and was sentenced to be beheaded. This dire fate the queen calmly and with dignity met

on the 19th of the same month (May, 1536), and on the following day Henry VIII. married his new love, Jane Seymour! With the recital of this tragedy, Ainsworth's romance comes rather abruptly to a close, save for a chapter on Windsor Castle and its annals, appended to the novel.

The element of the weird is imparted by the author to the story of "Windsor Castle" in the section devoted to Herne the Hunter and his strange, half-legendary career in Windsor Forest, in the region especially of what is known as Herne's Oak, familiar to readers of Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor." The incidents and scenes in the Great Park which surrounds the historic castle and magnificent royal residence, with its archers and bowmen and wardens, keepers, and woodsmen, and all the play in the novel of Herne himself and his mysterious appearances and disappearances, impart excitement as well as interest to the story; while curiosity is whetted about the happenings to the beautiful forest maiden, Mabel Lyndon, and her woodland grandsire, in the varied references to them by the novelist and to Herne's erratic love for the fair maid. Nor is one's interest less whetted in reading of the array of nobles and ladies of Henry's court, most of whom are historic characters, such as Sir Thomas Wyat, Sir Henry Norris, the Dukes of Richmond, Norfolk, and Suffolk, the poet Earl of Surrey who has an attachment for the Fair Geraldine (Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald), together with Lady Mary Howard, sister of the Earl of Surrey, not to speak of what is narrated of the doings of the Knights of the Garter, and the amusing appearances of court-jesters and hangers-on, like Will Sommers and Patch.

Though in portions loosely constructed, and incomplete as it is as a record of Henry the Eighth's career as king, and the uxorious possessor in his day of six successive

wives, "Windsor Castle" is an enthralling story, with many notably interesting historic, and not a few pathetically tragic, incidents, which its new readers, doubtless, will not fail to appreciate, as have tens of thousands of perusers of the book in the sixty-odd years that have elapsed since its first publication.

Book the First.

ANNE BOLEYN.

WINDSOR CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE EARL OF SURREY'S SOLITARY RAMBLE IN THE HOME PARK;—OF THE VISION BEHELD BY HIM IN THE HAUNTED DELL;—AND OF HIS MEETING WITH MORGAN FENWOLF, THE KEEPER, BENEATH HERNE'S OAK.

In the twentieth year of the reign of the right high and puissant king Henry the Eighth, namely, in 1529, on the twenty-first of April, and on one of the loveliest evenings that ever fell on the loveliest district in England, a fair youth, having somewhat the appearance of a page, was leaning over the terrace-wall on the north side of Windsor Castle, and gazing at the magnificent scene before him. On his right stretched the broad green expanse, forming the Home Park, studded with noble trees, chiefly consisting of ancient oaks, of which England had already learnt to be proud, thorns as old, or older than the oaks, wide-spreading beeches, tall elms, and hollies. The disposition of these trees was picturesque and beautiful in the extreme. Here, at the end of a sweeping vista, and in the midst of an open space, covered with the greenest sward, stood a mighty, broad-armed oak, beneath whose ample boughs, though as yet almost destitute of foliage, while the sod beneath them could scarcely boast a head of fern, couched a herd of deer; there, lay a thicket of

thorns skirting a sand-bank, burrowed by rabbits; on this hand, grew a dense and Druid-like grove, into whose intricacies the slanting sunbeams pierced; on that, extended a long glade, formed by a natural avenue of oaks, across which, at intervals, deer were passing. Nor were human figures wanting to give life and interest to the scene. Adown the glade came two keepers of the forest, having each a couple of buckhounds with them in leash, whose baying sounded cheerily amid the woods. Nearer the castle, and bending their way towards it, marched a party of falconers, with their well-trained birds, whose skill they had been approving, upon their fists, their jesses ringing as they moved along; while nearer still, and almost at the foot of the terrace wall, was a minstrel, playing on a rebec, to which a keeper, in a dress of Lincoln green, with a bow over his shoulder, a quiver of arrows at his back, and a comely damsel under his arm, was listening.

On the left, a view altogether different in character, though scarcely less beautiful, was offered to the gaze. It was formed by the town of Windsor, then not a third of its present size, but incomparably more picturesque in appearance, consisting almost entirely of a long straggling row of houses, checkered black and white, with tall gables and projecting stories, skirting the west and south sides of the castle; by the silver windings of the river, traceable for miles, and reflecting the glowing hues of the sky; by the venerable college of Eton, embowered in a grove of trees; and by a vast tract of well-wooded and well-cultivated country beyond it, interspersed with villages, churches, old halls, monasteries, and abbeys.

Taking out his tablets, the youth, after some reflection, traced a few lines upon them, and then, quitting the parapet, proceeded slowly, and with a musing air, towards the northwest angle of the terrace. He could not be

more than fifteen, perhaps not so much, but he was tall and well-grown, with slight, though remarkably well-proportioned limbs; and it might have been safely predicted, that, when arrived at years of maturity, he would possess great personal vigor. His countenance was full of thought and intelligence; and he had a broad, lofty brow, shaded by a profusion of light-brown ringlets, a long, straight, and finely-formed nose, a full, sensitive, and well-chiseled mouth, and a pointed chin. His eyes were large, dark, and somewhat melancholy in expression, and his complexion possessed that rich, clear, brown tint, constantly met with in Italy or Spain, though but seldom seen in a native of our own colder clime. His dress was rich, but somber; consisting of a doublet of black satin, worked with threads of Venetian gold; hose of the same material, and similarly embroidered; a shirt curiously wrought with black silk, and fastened at the collar with black enameled clasps; a cloak of black velvet, passmented with gold, and lined with crimson satin; a flat black velvet cap, set with pearls and goldsmith's work, and adorned with a short white plume; and black velvet buskins. His arms were rapier and dagger, both having gilt and graven handles, and sheaths of black velvet.

As he moved along, the sound of voices chanting vespers arose from Saint George's Chapel; and while he paused to listen to the solemn strains, a door in that part of the castle used as the king's privy-lodgings, opened, and a person advanced towards him. The newcomer had broad, brown, martial-looking features, darkened still more by a thick, coal-black beard, clipped short in the fashion of the time, and a pair of enormous moustachios. He was accoutered in a habergeon, which gleamed from beneath the folds of a russet-colored mantle, and wore a steel cap in lieu of a bonnet on his

head, while a long sword dangled from beneath his cloak. When within a few paces of the youth, whose back was towards him, and who did not hear his approach, he announced himself by a loud cough, that proved the excellence of his lungs, and made the old walls ring again, startling the jackdaws roosting in the battlements.

"What! composing a vesper hymn, my Lord of Surrey?" he cried with a laugh, as the other hastily thrust the tablets, which he had hitherto held in his hand, into his bosom. "You will rival Master Skelton, the poet-laureate, and your friend Sir Thomas Wyat, too, ere long. But will it please your lordship to quit for a moment the society of the celestial Nine, and descend to earth, while I inform you that, acting as your representative, I have given all needful directions for his majesty's reception to-morrow."

"You have not failed, I trust, to give orders to the groom of the chambers for the lodging of my fair cousin, Mistress Anne Boleyn, Captain Bouchier?" inquired the Earl of Surrey, with a significant smile.

"Assuredly not, my lord!" replied the other, smiling in his turn. "She will be lodged as royally as if she were Queen of England. Indeed, the queen's own apartments are assigned her."

"It is well," rejoined Surrey. "And you have also provided for the reception of the Pope's legate, Cardinal Campeggio?"

Bouchier bowed.

"And for Cardinal Wolsey?" pursued the other.

The captain bowed again.

"To save your lordship the necessity of asking any further questions," he said; "I may state briefly that I have done all as if you had done it yourself."

"Be a little more particular, captain, I pray you," said Surrey.

"Willingly, my lord," replied Bouchier. "In your lordship's name, then, as vice-chamberlain, in which character I presented myself, I summoned together the deans and canons of the College of Saint George, the usher of the black-rod, the governor of the alms-knights, and the whole of the officers of the household, and acquainted them, in a set speech, which, I flatter myself, was quite equal to any that your lordship, with all your poetical talents, could have delivered, that the king's highness being at Hampton Court, with the two cardinals, Wolsey and Campeggio, debating the matter of divorce from his queen, Catherine of Aragon, proposes to hold the grand feast of the most noble order of the Garter, at this his castle of Windsor, on Saint George's day,—that is to say, the day after to-morrow,—and that it is therefore his majesty's sovereign pleasure that the Chapel of Saint George, in the said castle, be set forth, and adorned with its richest furniture; that the high altar be hung with arras representing the patron saint of the order on horseback, and garnished with the costliest images and ornaments in gold and silver; that the pulpit be covered with crimson damask, inwrought with flowers-de-luces of gold, portcullices, and roses; that the royal stall be canopied with a rich cloth of state, with a haut-pas beneath it of a foot high; that the stalls of the knights-companions be decked with cloth of tissue, with their scutcheons set at the back; and that all be ready at the hour of tierce,—*horâ tertiâ vespertinâ*, as appointed by his majesty's own statute,—at which time the eve of the feast shall be held to commence."

"Take breath, captain," laughed the earl.

"I have no need," replied Bouchier. "Furthermore, I delivered your lordship's warrant from the lord chamberlain to the usher of the black-rod, to make ready and furnish Saint George's Hall, both for the supper to-

morrow and the grand feast on the following day; and I enjoined the dean and canons of the college, the alms-knights, and all the other officers of the order, to be in readiness for the occasion. And now having fulfilled my devoir, or rather your lordship's, I am content to resign my post as vice-chamberlain, to resume my ordinary one, that of your simple gentleman, and to attend you back to Hampton Court, whenever it shall please you to set forth."

"And that will not be for an hour at the least," replied the earl; "for I intend to take a solitary ramble in the Home Park."

"What! to seek inspiration for a song,—or to meditate upon the charms of the fair Geraldine, eh! my lord?" rejoined Bouchier. "But I will not question you too shrewdly. Only let me caution you against going near Herne's Oak. It is said that the demon hunter walks at nightfall, and scares, if he does not injure, all those who cross his path. At curfew toll I must quit the castle, and will then, with your attendants, proceed to the Garter, in Thames Street, where I will await your arrival. If we reach Hampton Court by midnight, it will be time enough, and as the moon will rise in an hour, we shall have a pleasant ride."

"Commend me to Bryan Bowntance, the worthy host of the Garter," said the earl; "and bid him provide you with a bottle of his best sack in which to drink my health."

"Fear me not," replied the other. "And I pray your lordship not to neglect my caution respecting Herne the hunter. In sober sooth, I have heard strange stories of his appearance of late, and should not care to go near the tree after dark."

The earl laughed somewhat skeptically, and the captain reiterating his caution, they separated;—Bouchier returning the way he came, and Surrey proceeding towards a

small drawbridge crossing the ditch on the eastern side of the castle, and forming a means of communication with the Little Park. He was challenged by a sentinel at the drawbridge, but on giving the password, he was allowed to cross it, and to pass through a gate on the further side opening upon the park.

Brushing the soft and dewy turf, with a footstep almost as light and bounding as that of a fawn, he speeded on for more than a quarter of a mile, when he reached a noble beech-tree, standing at the end of a clump of timber. A number of rabbits were feeding beneath it, but at his approach they instantly plunged into their burrows.

Here he halted to look at the castle. The sun had sunk behind it, dilating its massive keep to almost its present height, and tingeing the summits of the whole line of ramparts and towers, since rebuilt and known as the Brunswick Tower, the Chester Tower, the Clarence Tower, and the Victoria Tower, with rosy luster.

Flinging himself at the foot of the beech-tree, the youthful earl indulged his poetical reveries for a short time, and then rising, retraced his steps, and in a few minutes the whole of the south side of the castle lay before him. The view comprehended the two fortifications recently removed to make way for the York and Lancaster towers, between which stood a gate approached by a drawbridge; the Earl Marshal's Tower, now styled, from the monarch in whose reign it was erected, Edward the Third's Tower; the Black-rod's lodgings; the Lieutenant's—now Henry the Third's Tower; the line of embattled walls, constituting the lodgings of the Alms-Knights; the tower tenanted by the governor of that body, and still allotted to the same officer; Henry the Eighth's Gateway; and the Chancellor of the Garter's Tower,—the latter terminating the line of building. A few rosy beams tipped the pinnacles of Saint George's

Chapel, seen behind the towers above mentioned, with fire: but with this exception, the whole of the mighty fabric looked cold and gray.

At this juncture, the upper gate was opened, and Captain Bouchier and his attendants issued from it, and passed over the drawbridge. The curfew bell then tolled; the drawbridge was raised; the horsemen disappeared; and no sound reached the listener's ear, except the measured tread of the sentinels on the ramparts, audible in the profound stillness.

The youthful earl made no attempt to join his followers, but having gazed on the ancient pile before him, till its battlements and towers grew dim in the twilight, he struck into a footpath leading across the park, towards Datchet, and pursued it until it brought him near a dell filled with thorns, hollies, and underwood, and overhung by mighty oaks, into which he unhesitatingly plunged, and soon gained the deepest part of it. Here, owing to the thickness of the hollies, and the projecting arms of other large overhanging timber, added to the uncertain light above, the gloom was almost impervious, and he could scarcely see a yard before him. Still he pressed on unhesitatingly, and with a sort of pleasurable sensation at the difficulties he was encountering. Suddenly, however, he was startled by a blue phosphoric light streaming through the bushes on the left, and, looking up, he beheld at the foot of an enormous oak, whose giant roots protruded like twisted snakes from the bank, a wild, spectral-looking object, possessing some slight resemblance to humanity, and habited, so far as it could be determined, in the skins of deer, strangely disposed about its gaunt and tawny-colored limbs. On its head was seen a sort of helmet, formed of the skull of a stag, from which branched a large pair of antlers; from its left arm hung a heavy and rusty-looking chain, in the links of

which burnt the phosphoric fire before mentioned; while on its right wrist was perched a large horned owl, with feathers erected, and red staring eyes.

Impressed with the superstitious feelings common to the age, the young earl, fully believing he was in the presence of a supernatural being, could scarcely, despite his courageous nature, which no ordinary matter would have shaken, repress a cry. Crossing himself, he repeated, with great fervency, a prayer against evil spirits, and as he uttered it, the light was extinguished, and the spectral figure vanished. The clanking of the chain was heard, succeeded by the hooting of the owl; then came a horrible burst of laughter; then a fearful wail; and all was silent.

Up to this moment, the young earl had stood still, as if spellbound; but being now convinced that the spirit had fled, he pressed forward, and, ere many seconds, emerged from the brake. The full moon was rising, as he issued forth, and illuminating the glades and vista, and the calmness and beauty of all around seemed at total variance with the fearful vision he had just witnessed. Throwing a shuddering glance at the haunted dell, he was about to hurry towards the castle, when a large lightning-scathed and solitary oak, standing at a little distance from him, attracted his attention.

This was the very tree connected with the wild legend of Herne the hunter, which Captain Bouchier had warned him not to approach, and he now forcibly recalled the caution. Beneath it he perceived a figure, which he at first took for that of the spectral hunter; but his fears were relieved by a shout from the person, who at the same moment appeared to catch sight of him.

Satisfied that, in the present instance, he had to do with a being of this world, Surrey ran towards the tree, and on approaching it perceived that the object of his alarm

was a young man, of very athletic proportions, and evidently, from his garb, a keeper of the forest.

He was habited in a jerkin of Lincoln-green cloth, with the royal badge woven in silver on the breast, and his head was protected by a flat green cloth cap, ornamented with a pheasant's tail. Under his right arm he carried a crossbow; a long, silver-tipped horn was slung in his baldric; and he was armed with a short hanger, or wood-knife. His features were harsh and prominent; and he had black beetling brows, a large coarse mouth, and dark eyes, lighted up with a very sinister and malignant expression.

He was attended by a large, savage-looking stag-hound. whom he addressed as Bawsey, and whose fierceness had to be restrained as Surrey approached.

"Have you seen anything?" he demanded of the earl.

"I have seen Herne the hunter himself, or the fiend in his likeness," replied Surrey.

And he briefly related the vision he had beheld.

"Ay, ay, you have seen the demon hunter, no doubt," replied the keeper, at the close of the recital. "I neither saw the light, nor heard the laughter nor the wailing cry you speak of; but Bawsey crouched at my feet, and whined, and I knew some evil thing was at hand. Heaven shield us!" he exclaimed, as the hound crouched at his feet, and directed her gaze towards the oak, uttering a low, ominous whine. "She is at the same trick again."

The earl glanced in the same direction, and half expected to see the knotted trunk of the tree burst open and disclose the figure of the spectral hunter. But nothing was visible—at least to him, though it would seem, from the shaking limbs, fixed eyes, and ghastly visage of the keeper, that some appalling object was presented to his gaze.

"Do you not see him?" cried the latter, at length, in

thrilling accents—"He is circling the tree, and blasting it. There! he passes us now—do you not see him?"

"No," replied Surrey; "but do not let us tarry here longer."

So saying, he laid his hand upon the keeper's arm. The touch seemed to rouse him to exertion. He uttered a fearful cry, and set off at a quick pace along the park, followed by Bawsey, with her tail between her legs. The earl kept up with him, and neither halted till they had left the wizard oak at a considerable distance behind them.

"And so you did not see him?" said the keeper, in a tone of exhaustion, as he wiped the thick drops from his brow.

"I did not," replied Surrey.

"That is passing strange," rejoined the other. "I myself have seen him before, but never as he appeared to night."

"You are a keeper of the forest, I presume, friend?" said Surrey. "How are you named?"

"I am called Morgan Fenwolf," replied the keeper; "and you?"

"I am the Earl of Surrey," returned the young noble.

"What?" exclaimed Fenwolf, making a reverence; "the son to his grace of Norfolk?"

The earl replied in the affirmative.

"Why then you must be the young nobleman whom I used to see so often with the king's son, the Duke of Richmond, three or four years ago, at the castle?" rejoined Fenwolf. "You are altogether grown out of my recollection."

"Not unlikely," returned the earl. "I have been at Oxford, and have only just completed my studies. This is the first time I have been at Windsor since the period you mention."

"I have heard that the Duke of Richmond was at Oxford, likewise," observed Fenwolf.

"We were at Cardinal College together," replied Surrey. "But the duke's term was completed before mine. He is my senior by three years."

"I suppose your lordship is returning to the castle?" said Fenwolf.

"No," replied Surrey. "My attendants are waiting for me at the Garter, and if you will accompany me thither, I will bestow a cup of good ale upon you to recruit you after the fright you have undergone."

Fenwolf signified his grateful acquiescence, and they walked on in silence, for the earl could not help dwelling upon the vision he had witnessed, and his companion appeared equally abstracted.

In this sort, they descended the hill near Henry the Eighth's Gate, and entered Thames Street.

CHAPTER II.

OF BRYAN BOWNTANCE, THE HOST OF THE GARTER;—OF THE DUKE OF SHOREDITCH;—OF THE BOLD WORDS UTTERED BY MARK FYTTON, THE BUTCHER, AND HOW HE WAS CAST INTO THE VAULT OF THE CURFEW TOWER.

Turning off on the right, the earl and his companion continued to descend the hill, until they came in sight of the Garter,—a snug little hostel, situated immediately beneath the Curfew Tower.

Before the porch were grouped the earl's attendants, most of whom had dismounted, and were holding their steeds by the bridles. At this juncture, the door of the hostel opened, and a fat, jolly-looking personage, with a bald head, and bushy gray beard, and clad in a brown serge doublet, and hose to match, issued forth, bearing a foaming jug of ale, and a horn cup. His appearance was welcomed by a joyful shout from the attendants.

"Come, my masters!" he cried, filling the horn—"here is a cup of stout Windsor ale, in the which to drink the health of our jolly monarch, bluff King Hal; and there's no harm, I trust, in calling him so."

"Marry, is there not, mine host," cried the foremost attendant. "I spoke of him as such in his own hearing not long ago, and he laughed at me in right merry sort. I love the royal bully, and will drink his health gladly, and Mistress Anne Boleyn's to boot."

And he emptied the horn.

"They tell me Mistress Anne Boleyn is coming to Windsor with the king and the knights-companions to-morrow—is it so?" asked the host, again filling the horn, and handing it to another attendant.

The person addressed nodded, but he was too much engrossed by the horn to speak.

"Then there will be rare doings in the castle," chuckled the host; "and many a lusty pot will be drained at the Garter. Alack a day! how times are changed since I, Bryan Bowntance, first stepped into my father's shoes, and became host of the Garter. It was in 1501—twenty-eight years ago—when King Henry the Seventh, of blessed memory, ruled the land, and when his elder son, Prince Arthur, was alive likewise. In that year, the young prince espoused Catherine of Aragon, our present queen, and soon afterwards died; whereupon the old king, not liking—for he loved his treasure better than his own flesh—to part with her dowry, gave her to his second son, Henry, our gracious sovereign, whom God preserve! Folks said then the match wouldn't come to good; and now we find they spoke the truth, for it is likely to end in a divorce."

"Not so loud, mine host!" cried the foremost attendant; "here comes our young master, the Earl of Surrey."

"Well, I care not," replied the host, bluffly. "I've spoken no treason. I love my king; and if he wishes to have a divorce, I hope his holiness the pope will grant him one, that's all."

As he said this, a loud noise was heard within the hostel, and a man was so suddenly and so forcibly driven forth, that he almost knocked down Bryan Bowntance, who was rushing in to see what was the matter. The person thus ejected, who was a powerfully-built young man, in a leathern doublet, with his muscular arms bared to the shoulder, turned his rage upon the host, and seized him by the throat with a gripe that threatened him with strangulation. Indeed, but for the intervention of the earl's attendants, who rushed to his assistance, such might have been his fate. As soon as he was liberated, Bryan

cried, in a voice of mingled rage and surprise, to his assailant—"Why, what's the matter, Mark Fytton?—are you gone mad, or do you mistake me for a sheep or a bullock, that you attack me in this fashion? My strong ale must have got into your addle pate with a vengeance."

"The knave has been speaking treason of the king's highness," said a tall man, whose doublet and hose of the finest green cloth, as well as the bow and quiver full of arrows at his back, proclaimed him an archer—"and therefore we turned him out!"

"And you did well, Captain Barlow," cried the host.

"Call me, rather, the Duke of Shoreditch," rejoined the tall archer; "for since his majesty conferred the title upon me, though it were but in jest, when I won this silver bugle, I shall ever claim it. I am always designated by my neighbors in Shoreditch as his grace; and I require the same attention at your hands. To-morrow I shall have my comrades, the Marquises of Clerkenwell, Islington, Hogsden, Pancras, and Paddington, with me, and then you will see the gallant figure we shall cut."

"I crave your grace's pardon for my want of respect," replied the host. "I am not ignorant of the distinction conferred upon you at the last match at the castle-butts by the king. But to the matter in hand. What treason hath Mark Fytton, the butcher, been talking?"

"I care not to repeat his words, mine host," replied the duke; "but he hath spoken in unbecoming terms of his highness and Mistress Anne Boleyn."

"He means not what he says," rejoined the host. "He is a loyal subject of the king; but he is apt to get quarrelsome over his cups."

"Well said, honest Bryan," cried the duke; "you have one quality of a good landlord—that of a peacemaker. Give the knave a cup of ale, and let him wash down his foul words in a health to the king, wishing him a speedy

divorce and a new queen, and he shall then sit among us again."

"I do not desire to sit with you, you self-dubbed duke," rejoined Mark; "but if you will doff your fine jerkin, and stand up with me on the green, I will give you cause to remember laying hands on me."

"Well challenged, bold butcher!" cried one of Surrey's attendants. "You shall be made a duke yourself."

"Or a cardinal," cried Mark. "I should not be the first of my brethren who has met with such preferment."

"He derides the church in the person of Cardinal Wolsey!" cried the duke. "He is a blasphemer as well as traitor."

"Drink the king's health in a full cup, Mark," interposed the host, anxious to set matters right, "and keep your mischievous tongue between your teeth."

"Beshrew me if I drink the king's health, or that of his minion, Anne Boleyn!" cried Mark, boldly. "But I will tell you what I *will* drink. I will drink the health of King Henry's lawful consort, Catherine of Aragon; and I will add to it a wish, that the pope may forge her marriage chains to her royal husband faster than ever."

"A foolish wish," cried Bryan. "Why, Mark, you are clean crazed!"

"It is the king who is crazed, not me!" cried Mark. "He would sacrifice his rightful consort to his unlawful passion; and you, base hirelings, support the tyrant in his wrongful conduct!"

"Saints protect us!" exclaimed Bryan. "Why this is flat treason. Mark, I can no longer uphold you."

"Not if you do not desire to share his prison, mine host," cried the Duke of Shoreditch. "You have all heard him call the king a tyrant. Seize him, my masters!"

"Let them lay hands upon me, if they dare!" cried

the butcher, resolutely. "I have felled an ox with a blow of my fist before this, and I promise you I will show them no better treatment."

Awed by Mark's determined manner, the bystanders kept aloof.

"I command you, in the king's name, to seize him!" roared Shoreditch. "If he offers resistance, he will assuredly be hanged."

"No one shall touch me!" cried Mark, fiercely.

"That remains to be seen," said the foremost of the Earl of Surrey's attendants. "Yield, fellow!"

"Never!" replied Mark; "and I warn you to keep off."

The attendant, however, advanced; but before he could lay hands on the butcher, he received a blow from his ox-like fist that sent him reeling backwards for several paces, and finally stretched him at full length upon the ground. His companions drew their swords, and would have instantly fallen upon the sturdy offender, if Morgan Fenwolf, who, with the Earl of Surrey, was standing among the spectators, had not rushed forward, and, closing with Mark before the latter could strike a blow, grappled with him, and held him fast till he was secured, and his arms tied behind him.

"And so it is you, Morgan Fenwolf, who have served me this ill turn, eh?" cried the butcher, regarding him fiercely. "I now believe all I have heard of you."

"What have you heard of him?" asked Surrey, advancing.

"That he has dealings with the fiend,—with Herne the hunter," replied Mark. "If I am hanged for a traitor, he ought to be burnt for a wizard."

"Heed not what the villain says, my good fellow," said the Duke of Shoreditch; "you have captured him bravely, and I will take care your conduct is duly reported

to his majesty. To the castle with him! To the castle! He will lodge to-night in the deepest dungeon of yon fortification," pointing to the Curfew Tower above them, "there to await the king's judgment; and to-morrow night it will be well for him if he is not swinging from the gibbet near the bridge. Bring him along!"

And followed by Morgan Fenwolf and the others, with the prisoner, he strode up the hill.

Long before this, Captain Bouchier had issued from the hostel, and joined the earl, and they walked together after the crowd. In a few minutes, the Duke of Shoreditch reached Henry the Eighth's Gate, where he shouted to a sentinel, and told him what had occurred. After some delay, a wicket in the gate was opened, and the chief persons of the party were allowed to pass through it, with the prisoner, who was assigned to the custody of a couple of arquebusiers.

By this time an officer had arrived, and it was agreed, at the suggestion of the Duke of Shoreditch, to take the offender to the Curfew Tower. Accordingly, they crossed the lower ward, and passing beneath an archway near the semicircular range of habitations allotted to the petty canons, traversed the space before the west end of St. George's Chapel, and descending a short flight of stone steps at the left, and threading a narrow passage, presently arrived at the arched entrance in the Curfew Tower, whose hoary walls shone brightly in the moonlight.

They had to knock for some time against the stout oak door, before any notice was taken of the summons. At length, an old man, who acted as bellringer, thrust his head out of one of the narrow pointed windows above, and demanded their business. Satisfied with the reply, he descended, and opening the door, admitted them into a lofty chamber, the roof of which was composed of stout

planks, crossed by heavy oaken rafters, and supported by beams of the same material. On the left, a steep, ladder-like flight of wooden steps led to an upper room; and from a hole in the roof, descended a bell-rope, which was fastened to one of the beams, showing the use to which the chamber was put.

Some further consultation was now held among the party as to the propriety of leaving the prisoner in this chamber, under the guard of the arquebusiers; but it was at last decided against doing so, and the old bellringer being called upon for the keys of the dungeon beneath, he speedily produced them. They then went forth; and descending a flight of stone steps on the left, came to a low, strong door, which they unlocked, and obtained admission to a large octangular chamber with a vaulted roof, and deep embrasures terminated by narrow loop-holes. The light of a lamp carried by the bellringer showed the dreary extent of the vault, and the enormous thickness of its walls.

"A night's solitary confinement in this place will be of infinite service to our prisoner," said the Duke of Shoreditch, gazing around. "I'll be sworn he is now ready to bite off the foolish tongue that has brought him to such a pass."

The butcher made no reply; but being released by the arquebusiers, sat down upon a bench that constituted the sole furniture of the vault.

"Shall I leave him the lamp?" asked the bellringer. "He may beguile the time by reading the names of former prisoners scratched on the walls and in the embrasures."

"No; he shall not even have that miserable satisfaction," returned the Duke of Shoreditch. "He shall be left in the darkness to his own bad and bitter thoughts."

With this, the party withdrew, and the door was

fastened upon the prisoner. An arquebusier was stationed at the foot of the steps; and the Earl of Surrey and Captain Bouchier having fully satisfied their curiosity, shaped their course towards the castle gate. On their way thither, the earl looked about for Morgan Fenwolf, but could nowhere discern him. He then passed through the wicket with Bouchier, and proceeding to the Garter, they mounted their steeds, and galloped off towards Datchet, and thence to Staines and Hampton Court.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE GRAND PROCESSION TO WINDSOR CASTLE;—OF THE MEETING OF KING HENRY THE EIGHTH AND ANNE BOLEYN AT THE LOWER GATE;—OF THEIR ENTRANCE INTO THE CASTLE;—AND HOW THE BUTCHER WAS HANGED FROM THE CURFEW TOWER.

A JOYOUS day was it for Windsor, and great were the preparations made by its loyal inhabitants for a suitable reception to their sovereign. At an early hour, the town was thronged with strangers from the neighboring villages, and later on, crowds began to arrive from London; some having come along the highway on horseback, and others having rowed in various craft up the river. All were clad in holiday attire, and the streets presented an appearance of unwonted bustle and gaiety. The maypole in Bachelors' Acre was hung with flowers. Several booths, with flags floating above them, were erected in the same place, where ale, mead, and hypocras, together with cold pasties, hams, capons and large joints of beef and mutton, might be obtained. Mummers and minstrels were in attendance, and every kind of diversion was going forward. Here was one party wrestling; there another casting the bar; on this side, a set of rustics were dancing a merry round with a bevy of buxom Berkshire lasses; on that, stood a fourth group listening to a youth playing on the recorders. At one end of the Acre large fires were lighted, before which two whole oxen were roasting, provided in honor of the occasion, by the mayor and burgesses of the town; at the other, butts were set, against which the Duke of Shoreditch,

and his companions, the five marquesses, were practising. The duke himself shot admirably, and never failed to hit the bull's-eye; but the great feat of the day was performed by Morgan Fenwolf, who thrice split the duke's shafts as they stuck in the mark.

"Well done!" cried the duke, as he witnessed the achievement; "why, you shoot as bravely as Herne the hunter. Old wives tell us he used to split the arrows of his comrades in that fashion."

"He must have learnt the trick from Herne himself in the forest," cried one of the bystanders.

Morgan Fenwolf looked fiercely round in search of the speaker, but could not discern him. He, however, shot no more, and refusing a cup of hypocras offered him by Shoreditch, disappeared among the crowd.

Soon after this, the booths were emptied, the bar thrown down, the may-pole and the butts deserted, and the whole of Bachelors' Acre cleared of its occupants—except those who were compelled to attend to the mighty spits turning before the fires,—by the loud discharge of ordnance from the castle gates, accompanied by the ringing of bells, announcing that the mayor and burgesses of Windsor, together with the officers of the order of the Garter, were setting forth to Datchet Bridge, to meet the royal procession.

Those who most promptly obeyed this summons beheld the lower castle gate, built by the then reigning monarch, open, while from it issued four trumpeters clad in emblazoned coats, with silken bandrols depending from their horns, blowing loud fanfares. They were followed by twelve henchmen, walking four abreast, arrayed in scarlet tunics, with the royal cipher, D. R., worked in gold on the breast, and carrying gilt pole-axes over their shoulders. Next came a company of archers, equipped in helm and brigandine, and armed with long pikes, glittering, as

did their steel accouterments, in the bright sunshine. They were succeeded by the bailiffs and burgesses of the town, riding three abreast, and enveloped in gowns of scarlet cloth; after whom rode the mayor of Windsor, in a gown of crimson velvet, and attended by two footmen, in white and red damask, carrying white wands. The mayor was followed by a company of the town guard, with partisans over the shoulders. Then came the sheriff of the county and his attendants. Next followed the twenty-six alms-knights, (for such was then their number,) walking two and two, and wearing red mantles, with a scutcheon of Saint George on the shoulder, but without the garter surrounding it. Then came the thirteen petty canons, in murrey-colored gowns, with the arms of Saint George wrought in a roundel on the shoulder; then the twelve canons, similarly attired; and lastly, the dean of the college in his cope.

A slight pause ensued, and the chief officers of the Garter made their appearance. First walked the Black-rod, clothed in a russet-colored mantle, faced with alternate panes of blue and red, emblazoned with flower de luces of gold, and crowned lions. He carried a small black rod, the ensign of his office, surmounted with the lion of England in silver. After the Black-rod came the Garter, habited in a gown of crimson satin, paned and emblazoned like that of the officer who preceded him, bearing a white crown with a scepter upon it, and having a gilt crown, in lieu of a cap, upon his head. The Garter was followed by the Register, a grave personage, in a black gown, with a surplice over it, covered by a mantelet of furs. Then came the chancellor of the order, in his robe of murrey-colored velvet lined with sarcenet, with a badge on the shoulder consisting of a gold rose, enclosed in a garter wrought with pearls of damask gold. Lastly, came the Bishop of Winchester, the prelate of the order, wearing

his miter, and habited in a robe of crimson velvet lined with white taffeta, faced with blue, and embroidered on the right shoulder with a scutcheon of Saint George, encompassed with the garter, and adorned with cordons of blue silk mingled with gold.

Brought up by a rear-guard of halberdiers, the procession moved slowly along Thames Street, the houses of which, as well as those in Peascod Street, were all more or less decorated,—the humbler sort being covered with branches of trees, intermingled with garlands of flowers, while the better description was hung with pieces of tapestry, carpets, and rich stuffs. Nor should it pass unnoticed that the loyalty of Bryan Bowntance, the host of the Garter, had exhibited itself in an arch thrown across the road opposite his house, adorned with various colored ribbons and flowers, in the midst of which was a large shield, exhibiting the letters H. and A. (in mystic allusion to Henry and Anne Boleyn) intermingled, and surrounded by love-knots.

Turning off on the left into the lower road, skirting the north of the Castle, and following the course of the river to Datchet, by which it was understood the royal cavalcade would make its approach, the procession arrived at an open space by the side of the river, where it came to a halt, and the dean, chancellor, and prelate, together with other officers of the Garter, embarked in a barge moored to the bank, which was towed slowly down the stream in the direction of Datchet Bridge,—a band of minstrels stationed within it, playing all the time.

Meanwhile, the rest of the cavalcade, having again set forward, pursued their course along the banks of the river, proceeding at a foot's pace, and accompanied by crowds of spectators, cheering them as they moved along. The day was bright and beautiful, and nothing was wanting to enhance the beauty of the spectacle. On the left flowed

the silver Thames, crowded with craft, filled with richly dressed personages of both sexes, amid which floated the pompous barge appropriated to the officers of the Garter, which was hung with banners and streamers, and decorated at the sides with targets, emblazoned with the arms of Saint George. On the green sward edging the stream marched a brilliant cavalcade; and on the right lay the old woods of the Home Park, with long vistas opening through them, giving exquisite peeps of the towers and battlements of the castle.

Half an hour brought the cavalcade to Datchet Bridge, at the foot of which a pavilion was erected for the accommodation of the mayor and burgesses. And here, having dismounted, they awaited the king's arrival.

Shortly after this, a cloud of dust on the Staines road seemed to announce the approach of the royal party, and all rushed forth, and held themselves in readiness to meet it. But the dust appeared to have been raised by a company of horsemen, headed by Captain Bouchier, who rode up the next moment. Courteously saluting the mayor, Bouchier informed him that Mistress Anne Boleyn was close behind, and that it was the king's pleasure that she should be attended in all state to the lower gate of the castle, there to await his coming, as he himself intended to enter it with her. The mayor replied that the sovereign's behests should be implicitly obeyed; and he thereupon stationed himself at the further side of the bridge in expectation of Anne Boleyn's arrival.

Presently, the sound of trumpets smote his ear, and a numerous and splended retinue was seen advancing, consisting of nobles, knights, esquires, and gentlemen, ranged according to their degrees, and all sumptuously apparelled in cloths of gold and silver, and velvets of various colors, richly embroidered. Besides these, there were pages and other attendants in the liveries of their masters,

together with sergeants of the guard and henchmen, in their full accouterments. Among the nobles were the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk,—the king being desirous of honoring, as much as possible, her whom he had resolved to make his queen: the former was clothed in tissue, embroidered with roses of gold, with a baldric across his body of massive gold, and was mounted on a charger likewise trapped in gold; and the latter wore a mantle of cloth of silver, pounced in the form of letters, and lined with blue velvet, while his horse was trapped bardwise in harness embroidered with bullion gold curiously wrought. Both also wore the collar of the order of the Garter. Near them rode Sir Thomas Boleyn, who, conscious of the dignity to which his daughter was to be advanced, comported himself with almost intolerable haughtiness.

Immediately behind Sir Thomas Boleyn came a sumptuous litter covered with cloth of gold, drawn by four white palfreys caparisoned in white damask down to the ground, and each having a page in white and blue satin at its head. Over the litter was borne a canopy of cloth of gold supported by four gilt staves, and ornamented at the corners with silver bells, ringing forth sweet music as it moved along. Each staff was borne by a knight, of whom sixteen were in attendance to relieve one another when fatigued.

In this litter sat Anne Boleyn. She wore a surcoat of white tissue, and a mantle of the same material lined with ermine. Her gown, which, however, was now concealed by the surcoat, was of cloth of gold tissue, raised with pearls of silver damask, with a stomacher of purple gold similarly raised, and large open sleeves lined with checkered tissue. Around her neck she wore a chain of orient pearls, from which depended a diamond cross. A black velvet cap, richly embroidered with pearls and other

precious stones, and ornamented with a small white plume, covered her head; and her small feet were hidden in blue velvet brodequins, decorated with diamond stars.

Anne Boleyn's features were exquisitely formed, and though not regular, far more charming than if they had been so. Her nose was slightly aquiline, but not enough so to detract from its beauty, and had a little *retroussé* point that completed its attraction. The rest of her features were delicately chiseled; the chin being beautifully rounded, the brows smooth and white as snow, while the rose could not vie with the bloom of her cheek. Her neck—alas! that the fell hand of the executioner should ever touch it—was long and slender, her eyes large and blue, and of irresistible witchery—sometimes scorching the beholder like a sunbeam, anon melting him with soul-subduing softness.

Of her accomplishments other opportunities will be found to speak; but it may be mentioned that she was skilled on many instruments, danced and sung divinely, and had rare powers of conversation and wit. If to these she had not added the dangerous desire to please, and the wish to hold other hearts than the royal one she had enslaved, in thraldom, all might, perhaps, have been well. But, alas! like many other beautiful women, she had a strong tendency to coquetry. How severely she suffered for it, it is the purpose of this history to relate. An excellent description of her has been given by a contemporary writer, the Comte de Chateaubriand, who, while somewhat disparaging her personal attractions, speaks in rapturous terms of her accomplishments:—"*Anne*," writes the Comte, "*avait un esprit si deslie qui c'estoit à qui l'ouïroit desgoiser; et si venoit-elle à poëtiser, telle qu' Orpheus, elle eust faict les ours et rochers attentifs: puis saltoit, balloit, et dançoit toutes dances Anglaises ou Estranges, et en imagina nombre qui ont gardé son nom ou*

celluy du galant pour qui les feit; puis sçavoit tous les jeux, qu'elle jouoit avec non plus d'heur que d'habilité; puis chantoit comme syrène, s'accompagnant de luth; harpoit mieuelx que le roy David, et manioit fort gentilment fleuste et rebec; puis s'accoustroit de tant et si merveilleuses façons, que ses inventions, faisoient d'elle le parangon de toutes les dames les plus sucrées de la court; mais nulle n'avoit sa grace, laquelle, au dire d'un ancien, passe venusté." Such was the opinion of one who knew her well during her residence at the French court, when in attendance on Mary of England, consort of Louis XII., and afterwards Duchess of Suffolk.

At this moment, Anne's eyes were fixed with some tenderness upon one of the supporters of her canopy on the right,—a very handsome young man, attired in a doublet and hose of black tylsent, paned and cut, and whose tall, well-proportioned figure was seen to the greatest advantage, inasmuch as he had divested himself of his mantle, for his better convenience in walking.

"I fear me you will fatigue yourself, Sir Thomas Wyat," said Anne Boleyn, in tones of musical sweetness, which made the heart beat, and the color mount to the cheeks of him she addressed. "You had better allow Sir Thomas Arundel or Sir John Hulstone to relieve you."

"I can feel no fatigue when near you, madam," replied Wyat, in a low tone.

A slight blush overspread Anne's features, and she raised her embroidered kerchief to her lips.

"If I had that kerchief I would wear it at the next lists, and defy all comers," said Wyat.

"You shall have it, then," rejoined Anne. "I love all chivalrous exploits, and will do my best to encourage them."

"Take heed, Sir Thomas," said Sir Francis Weston, the knight who held the staff on the other side, "or we shall

have the canopy down. Let Sir Thomas Arundel relieve you."

"No," rejoined Wyat, recovering himself; "I will not rest till we come to the bridge."

"You are in no haste to possess the kerchief," said Anne, petulantly.

"There you wrong me, madam!" cried Sir Thomas, eagerly. "What ho, good fellows!" he shouted to the attendants at the palfreys' heads; "your lady desires you to stop."

"And I desire them to go on,—I, Will Sommers, jester to the high and mighty King Harry the Eighth!" cried a voice of mock authority behind the knight; "what, if Sir Thomas Wyat has undertaken to carry the canopy further than any of his companions, is that a reason he should be relieved? Of a surety not—go on, I say!"

The person who thus spoke then stepped forward, and threw a glance so full of significance at Anne Boleyn that she did not care to dispute the order, but on the contrary, laughingly acquiesced in it.

Will Sommers, the king's jester, as he described himself, was a small, middle-aged personage, with a physiognomy in which good-nature and malice, folly and shrewdness, were so oddly blended, that it was difficult to say which predominated. His look was cunning and sarcastic, but it was tempered by great drollery and oddity of manner, and he laughed so heartily at his own jests and jibes, that it was scarcely possible to help joining him. His attire consisted of a long, loose gown, of spotted crimson silk, with the royal cipher woven in front in gold; hose of blue cloth, guarded with red and black cloth; and red cordovan buskins. A sash tied round his waist served him instead of a girdle, and he wore a trencher-shaped velvet cap on his head, with a white tufted feather in it. In his hand he carried a small horn. He was generally

attended by a monkey, habited in a crimson doublet and hood, which sat upon his shoulder, and played very diverting tricks, but the animal was not with him on the present occasion.

Will Sommers was a great favorite with the king, and ventured upon familiarities which no one else dared to use with him. The favor in which he stood with his royal master procured him admittance to his presence at all hours, and at all seasons, and his influence, though seldom exerted, was very great. He was especially serviceable in turning aside the edge of the king's displeasure, and more frequently exerted himself to allay the storm, than to raise it. His principal hostility was directed against Wolsey, whose arrogance and grasping practises were the constant subjects of his railing. It was seldom, such was his privileged character, and the protection he enjoyed from the sovereign, that any of the courtiers resented his remarks; but Sir Thomas Wyat's feelings being now deeply interested, he turned sharply round, and said—"How now, thou meddling varlet, what business hast thou to interfere?"

"I interfere to prove my authority, gossip Wyat," replied Sommers, "and to show that, varlet as I am, I am as powerful as Mistress Anne Boleyn; nay, that I am yet more powerful, because I am obeyed, while she is not."

"Were I at liberty," said Sir Thomas, angrily, "I would make thee repent thine insolence."

"But thou art not at liberty, good gossip," replied the jester screaming with laughter; "thou art tied like a slave to the oar, and cannot free thyself from it—ha! ha!" Having enjoyed the knight's discomposure for a few seconds, he advanced towards him, and whispered in his ear:—"Don't mistake me, gossip. I have done thee good service in preventing thee from taking that kerchief. Hadst thou received it in the presence of these witnesses,

thou wouldst have been lodged in the Round Tower of Windsor Castle to-morrow, instead of feasting with the knights-companions in Saint George's Hall."

"I believe thou art right, gossip," said Wyat, in the same tone.

"Rest assured I am," replied Sommers; "and I furthermore counsel thee to decline this dangerous gift altogether, and to think no more of the fair profferer, or if thou *must* think of her, let it be as of one beyond thy reach. Cross not the lion's path. Take a friendly hint from the jackal."

And without waiting for a reply, he darted away, and mingled with the cavalcade in the rear.

Immediately behind Anne Boleyn's litter rode a company of henchmen of the royal household, armed with gilt partisans. Next succeeded a chariot covered with red cloth of gold, and drawn by four horses richly caparisoned, containing the old Duchess of Norfolk and the old Marchioness of Dorset. Then came the king's natural son, the Duke of Richmond—a young man formed on the same large scale, and distinguished by the same haughty port and the same bluff manner, as his royal sire. The duke's mother was the Lady Talboys, esteemed one of the most beautiful women of the age, and who had, for a long time, held the capricious monarch captive. Henry was warmly attached to his son; showered favors without number upon him; and might have done yet more, if fate had not snatched him away at an early age.

Though scarcely eighteen, the Duke of Richmond looked more than twenty, and his lips and chin were clothed with a well grown, though closely-clipped beard. He was magnificently habited in a doublet of cloth of gold of bawdekin, the placard and sleeves of which were wrought with flat gold, and fastened with aiglets. A girdle of crimson velvet, enriched with precious stones, encircled

his waist, and sustained a poniard, and a Toledo sword, damascened with gold. Over all he wore a loose robe, or *housse*, of scarlet mohair, trimmed with minever; and was further decorated with the collar of the order of the Garter. His cap was of white velvet, ornamented with emeralds, and from the side depended a small azure plume. He rode a magnificent black charger trapped in housings of cloth of gold, powdered with ermine.

By the duke's side rode the Earl of Surrey, attired as upon the previous day, and mounted on a fiery Arabian, trapped in crimson velvet, fringed with Venetian gold. Both nobles were attended by their esquires in their liveries.

Behind them came a chariot covered with cloth of silver, and drawn, like the first, by four horses in rich housings, containing two very beautiful damsels, one of whom attracted so much of the attention of the youthful nobles, that it was with difficulty they could preserve due order of march. The young dame in question was about seventeen; her face was oval in form, with features of the utmost delicacy and regularity. Her complexion was fair and pale, and contrasted strikingly with her jetty brows and magnificent black eyes, of oriental size, tenderness, and luster. Her dark and luxuriant tresses were confined by a cap of black velvet faced with white satin, and ornamented with pearls. Her gown was of white satin worked with gold, and had long, open, pendent sleeves; while from her slender and marble neck hung a cordelière—a species of necklace imitated from the cord worn by Franciscan friars, and formed of crimson silk twisted with threads of Venetian gold.

This fair creature was the Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, daughter of Gerald Fitzgerald, ninth Earl of Kildare, who claimed descent from the Geraldi family of Florence; but she was generally known by the appellation of the

Fair Geraldine—a title bestowed upon her, on account of her beauty, by the king, and by which she still lives, and will continue to live, as long as poetry endures, in the deathless and enchanting strains of her lover, the Earl of Surrey. At the instance of her mother, Lady Kildare, the fair Geraldine was brought up with the Princess Mary, afterwards Queen of England; but she had been lately assigned by the royal order as one of the attendants—a post equivalent to that of maid of honor—to Anne Boleyn.

Her companion was the Lady Mary Howard, the sister of the Earl of Surrey, a nymph about her own age, and possessed of great personal attractions, having nobly-formed features, radiant blue eyes, light tresses, and a complexion of dazzling clearness. Lady Mary Howard nourished a passion for the Duke of Richmond, whom she saw with secret chagrin captivated by the superior charms of the fair Geraldine. Her uneasiness, however, was in some degree abated by the knowledge, which, as confidante of the latter she had obtained, that her brother was master of her heart. Lady Mary was dressed in blue velvet, cut and lined with cloth of gold, and wore a head-gear of white velvet, ornamented with pearls.

Just as the cavalcade came in sight of Datchet Bridge, the Duke of Richmond turned his horse's head, and rode up to the side of the chariot on which the fair Geraldine was sitting.

"I am come to tell you of a marvelous adventure that befell Surrey in the Home Park at Windsor, last night," he said. "He declares he has seen the demon hunter Herne."

"Then pray let the Earl of Surry relate the adventure to us himself," replied the fair Geraldine. "No one can tell a story so well as the hero of it."

The duke signed to the youthful earl, who was glanc-

ing rather wistfully at them, and he immediately joined them, while Richmond passed over to the Lady Mary Howard. Surrey then proceeded to relate what had happened to him in the park, and the fair Geraldine listened to his recital with breathless interest.

"Heaven shield us from evil spirits!" she exclaimed, crossing herself. "But what is the history of this wicked hunter, my lord?—and why did he incur such a dreadful doom?"

"I know nothing more than that he was a keeper in the forest, who, having committed some heinous crime, hanged himself from a branch of the oak beneath which I found the keeper, Morgan Fenwolf—and which still bears his name," replied the earl. "For this unrighteous act, he cannot obtain rest, but is condemned to wander through the forest at midnight, where he wreaks his vengeance in blasting the trees."

"The legend I have heard differs from yours," observed the Duke of Richmond. "It runs that the spirit by which the forest is haunted is a wood-demon, who assumes the shape of the ghostly hunter, and seeks to tempt or terrify the keepers to sell their souls to him."

"Your grace's legend is the better of the two," said Lady Mary Howard, "or rather, I should say, the more probable. I trust the evil spirit did not make you any such offer, brother of Surrey?"

The earl gravely shook his head.

"If I were to meet him, and he offered me my heart's dearest wish, I fear he would prevail with me," observed the duke, glancing tenderly at the fair Geraldine.

"Tush!—the subject is too serious for jesting, Richmond," said Surrey, almost sternly.

"His grace, as is usual in compacts with the fiend, might have reason to rue his bargain," observed Lady Mary Howard, peevishly.

"If the Earl of Surrey were my brother," remarked the fair Geraldine to the Lady Mary, "I would interdict him from roaming in the park after nightfall."

"He is very wilful," said Lady Mary, smiling, "and holds my command but lightly."

"Let the fair Geraldine lay hers upon me, and she shall not have to reproach me with disobedience," rejoined the earl.

"I must interpose to prevent their utterance," cried Richmond, with a somewhat jealous look at his friend—"for I have determined to know more of this mystery, and shall require the earl's assistance to unravel it. I think I remember Morgan Fenwolf, the keeper, and will send for him to the castle and question him. But in any case, I and Surrey will visit Herne's oak to-night."

The remonstrances of both ladies were interrupted by the sudden appearance of Will Sommers.

"What ho! my lords—to your places! to your places!" cried the jester, in a shrill, angry voice. "See ye not we are close upon Datchet Bridge? Ye can converse with these fair dames at a more fitting season; but it is the king's pleasure that the cavalcade should make a goodly show. To your places, I say!"

Laughing at the jester's peremptory injunction, the two young nobles nevertheless obeyed it, and, bending almost to the saddlebow to the ladies, resumed their posts.

The concourse assembled on Datchet Bridge welcomed Anne Boleyn's arrival with loud acclamations, while joyous strains proceeded from sackbut and psaltery, and echoing blasts from the trumpets. Caps were flung into the air, and a piece of ordnance was fired from the barge, which was presently afterwards answered by the castle guns. Having paid his homage to Anne Boleyn, the mayor rejoined the company of bailiffs and burgesses, and the whole cavalcade crossed the bridge, winding their

way slowly along the banks of the river, the barge, with the minstrels playing in it, accompanying them the while. In this way, they reached Windsor, and as Anne Boleyn gazed up at the lordly castle, above which the royal standard now floated, proud and aspiring thoughts swelled her heart, and she longed for the hour when she should approach it as its mistress. Just then, her eye chanced on Sir Thomas Wyat, who was riding behind her amongst the knights, and she felt, though it might cost her a struggle, that love would yield to ambition.

Leaving the barge and its occupants to await the king's arrival, the cavalcade ascended Thames Street, and were welcomed everywhere with acclamations and rejoicing. Bryan Bowntance, who had stationed himself on the right of the arch in front of his house, attempted to address Anne Boleyn, but could not bring forth a word. His failure, however, was more successful than his speech might have been, inasmuch as it excited abundance of merriment.

Arrived at the area in front of the lower gateway, Anne Boleyn's litter was drawn up in the midst of it, and the whole of the cavalcade grouping around her, presented a magnificent sight to the archers and arquebusiers stationed on the towers and walls.

Just at this moment, a signal gun was heard from Datchet Bridge, announcing that the king had reached it, and the Dukes of Suffolk, Norfolk and Richmond, together with the Earl of Surrey, Sir Thomas Wyat, and a few of their gentlemen, rode back to meet him. They had scarcely, however, reached the foot of the hill when the royal party appeared in view, for the king, with his characteristic impatience, on drawing near the castle, had urged his attendants quickly forward.

First came half a dozen trumpeters, with silken bandrols fluttering in the breeze, blowing loud flourishes. Then

a party of halberdiers, whose leaders had pennons streaming from the tops of their tall pikes. Next came two gentlemen-ushers bareheaded, but mounted and richly habited, belonging to the cardinal of York, who cried out, as they pressed forward—"On before, my masters, on before!—make way for my lord's grace."

Then came a sergeant of arms bearing a great mace of silver, and two gentlemen carrying each a pillar of silver. Next rode a gentleman carrying the cardinal's hat, and after him came Wolsey himself, mounted on a mule trapped in crimson velvet, with a saddle covered with the same stuff, and gilt stirrups. His large person was arrayed in robes of the finest crimson satin engrained, and a silk cap of the same color contrasted by its brightness with the pale, purple tint of his sullen, morose, and bloated features. The cardinal took no notice of the clamor around him, but now and then, when an expression of dislike was uttered against him, for he had already begun to be unpopular with the people, he would raise his eyes and direct a withering glance at the hardy speaker. But these expressions were few, for, though tottering, Wolsey was yet too formidable to be insulted with impunity. On either side of him were two mounted attendants, each carrying a gilt pole-axe, who, if he had given the word, would have instantly chastised the insolence of the bystanders; while behind him rode his two cross-bearers, upon horses trapped in scarlet.

Wolsey's princely retinue was followed by a litter of crimson velvet, in which lay the Pope's legate, Cardinal Campeggio, whose infirmities were so great that he could not move without assistance. Campeggio was likewise attended by a numerous train.

After a long line of lords, knights, and esquires, came Henry the Eighth. He was appareled in a robe of crimson velvet furred with ermines, and wore a doublet of

192410

raised gold, the placard of which was embroidered with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, large pearls, and other precious stones. About his neck was a baldric of balas rubies, and over his robe he wore the collar of the order of the Garter. His horse, a charger of the largest size, and well able to sustain his vast weight, was trapped in crimson velvet purfled with ermines. His knights and esquires were clothed in purple velvet, and his henchmen in scarlet tunics of the same make as those worn by the warders of the Tower at the present day.

Henry was in his thirty-eighth year, and though somewhat overgrown and heavy, had lost none of his activity, and but little of the grace of his noble proportions. His size and breadth of limb were well displayed in his magnificent habiliments. His countenance was handsome and manly, with a certain broad burly look, thoroughly English in its character, which won him much admiration from his subjects; and though it might be objected that the eyes were too small, and the mouth somewhat too diminutive, it could not be denied that the general expression of the face was kingly in the extreme. A prince of a more "royal presence" than Henry the Eighth was never seen, and though he had many and grave faults, want of dignity was not amongst the number.

Henry entered Windsor amid the acclamations of the spectators, the fanfares of trumpeters, and the roar of ordnance from the castle walls.

Meanwhile, Anne Boleyn, having descended from her litter, which passed through the gate into the lower ward, stood with her ladies beneath the canopy awaiting his arrival.

A wide clear space was preserved before her, into which, however, Wolsey penetrated, and dismounting, placed himself so that he could witness the meeting

"Fair Mistress," said the King, "I welcome you to this my Castle of Windsor." Page 39.

—*Windsor Castle.*

between her and the king. Behind him stood the jester, Will Sommers, who was equally curious with himself. The litter of Cardinal Campeggio passed through the gateway and proceeded to the lodgings reserved to his eminence.

Scarcely had Wolsey taken up his station than Henry rode up, and, alighting, consigned his horse to a page, and, followed by the Duke of Richmond and the Earl of Surrey, advanced towards Anne Boleyn, who immediately stepped forward to meet him.

"Fair mistress," he said, taking her hand, and regarding her with a look of passionate devotion, "I welcome you to this my castle of Windsor, and trust soon to make you as absolute mistress of it, as I am lord and master."

Anne Boleyn blushed, and cast down her eyes, and Sir Thomas Wyat, who stood at some little distance with his hand upon his saddle, regarding her, felt that any hopes he might have entertained were utterly annihilated.

"Heard you that, my lord cardinal?" said Will Sommers to Wolsey. "She will soon be mistress here. As she comes in, you go out—mind that!"

The cardinal made no answer further than was conveyed by the deepened color of his cheeks.

Amid continued fanfares and acclamations, Harry then led Anne Boleyn through the gateway, followed by the ladies in waiting, who were joined by Richmond and Surrey. The prelate, chancellor, register, black-rod, and other officers of the Garter, together with the whole of the royal retinue who had dismounted, came after them. A vast concourse of spectators, extending almost as far as the Lieutenant's Tower, was collected in front of the Alms-Knights' Houses; but a wide space had been kept clear by the henchmen for the passage of the sovereign and his train, and along this, Henry proceeded with Anne

Boleyn, in the direction of the upper ward. Just as he reached the Norman Tower, and passed the entrance to the keep, the Duke of Shoreditch, who was standing beneath the gateway, advanced towards him, and prostrated himself on one knee.

"May it please your majesty," said Shoreditch, "I last night arrested a butcher of Windsor, for uttering words highly disrespectful of your highness, and of the fair and virtuous lady by your side."

"Ah! God's death!" exclaimed the king. "Where is the traitor? Bring him before us."

"He is here," replied Shoreditch.

And immediately Mark Fytton was brought forward by a couple of halberdiers. He still preserved his undaunted demeanor, and gazed sternly at the king.

"So, fellow, thou hast dared to speak disrespectfully of us—ha!" cried Henry.

"I have spoken the truth," replied the butcher, fearlessly. "I have said you were about to divorce your lawful consort, Catherine of Aragon, and to take the minion, Anne Boleyn, who stands beside you, to your bed. And I added it was a wrongful act."

"Foul befall thy lying tongue for saying so!" replied Henry, furiously. "I have a mind to pluck it from thy throat, and cast it to the dogs. What ho! guards, take this caitiff to the summit of the highest tower of the castle—the Curfew Tower—and hang him from it, so that all my loyal subjects in Windsor may see how traitors are served."

"Your highness has judged him justly," said Anne Boleyn.

"You say so now, Mistress Anne Boleyn," rejoined the butcher, "but you yourself shall one day stand in as much peril of your life as I do, and shall plead as vainly as I should, were I to plead at all, which I will never do,

to this inexorable tyrant. You will then remember my end."

"Away with him!" cried Henry. "I myself will go to the Garter Tower to see it done. Farewell for a short while, sweetheart. I will read these partisans of Catherine a terrible lesson."

As the butcher was hurried off to the Curfew Tower, the king proceeded with his attendants to the Garter Tower, and ascended to its summit.

In less than ten minutes, a stout pole, like the mast of a ship, was thrust through the battlements of the Curfew Tower, on the side looking towards the town. To this pole a rope, of some dozen feet in length, and having a noose at one end, was firmly secured. The butcher was then brought forth, bound hand and foot, and the noose was thrown over his neck.

While this was passing, the wretched man descried a person looking at him from a window in a wooden structure projecting from the side of the tower.

"What, are you there, Morgan Fenwolf?" he cried. "Remember what passed between us in the dungeon last night, and be warned! You will not meet your end as firmly as I meet mine."

"Make thy shrift quickly, fellow, if thou hast aught to say," interposed one of the halberdiers.

"I have no shrift to make," rejoined the butcher. "I have already settled my account with Heaven. God preserve Queen Catherine!"

As he uttered these words, he was thrust off from the battlements by the halberdiers, and his body swung into the abyss, amid the hootings and execrations of the spectators below.

Having glutted his eyes with the horrible sight, Henry descended from the tower, and returned to Anne Boleyn.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW KING HENRY THE EIGHTH HELD A CHAPTER OF THE GARTER; HOW HE ATTENDED VESPERS AND MATINS IN SAINT GEORGE'S CHAPEL; AND HOW HE FEASTED WITH THE KNIGHTS-COMPANIONS IN SAINT GEORGE'S HALL.

From a balcony overlooking the upper ward, Anne Boleyn beheld the king's approach on his return from the Garter Tower, and waving her hand smilingly to him, she withdrew into the presence-chamber. Hastening to her, Henry found her surrounded by her ladies of honor, by the chief of the nobles and knights who had composed her train from Hampton Court, and by the Cardinals Wolsey and Campeggio; and having exchanged a few words with her, he took her hand, and led her to the upper part of the chamber, where two chairs of state were set beneath a canopy of crimson velvet embroidered with the royal arms, and placed her in the seat, hitherto allotted to Catherine of Aragon. A smile of triumph irradiated Anne's lovely countenance at this mark of distinction; nor was her satisfaction diminished, as Henry turned to address the assemblage.

"My lords," he said, "ye are right well aware of the scruples of conscience I entertain in regard to my marriage with my brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon. The more I weigh the matter, the more convinced am I of its unlawfulness; and were it possible to blind myself to my sinful condition, the preachers, who openly rebuke me from the pulpit, would take care to remind me of it. Misunderstand me not, my lords. I have no ground of complaint against the queen. Far otherwise. She is a lady

of most excellent character—full of devotion, loyalty, nobility, and gentleness. And if I could divest myself of my misgivings, so far from seeking to put her from me, I should cherish her with the greatest tenderness. Ye may marvel that I have delayed the divorce thus long. But it is only of late that my eyes have been opened; and the step was hard to take. Old affections clung to me—old chains restrained me—nor could I, without compunction, separate myself from one who has ever been to me a virtuous and devoted consort."

"Thou hast undergone a martyrdom, gossip," observed Will Sommers, who had posted himself at the foot of the canopy, near the king, "and shalt henceforth be denominated Saint Henry."

The gravity of the hearers might have been discomposed by this remark, but for the stern looks of the king.

"Ye may make a jest of my scruples, my lords," he continued, "and think I hold them lightly; but my treatise on the subject, which has cost me much labor and meditation, will avouch to the contrary. What would befall this realm if my marriage were called in question after my decease? The same trouble and confusion would ensue that followed on the death of my noble grandfather, King Edward the Fourth. To prevent such mischance, I have resolved, most reluctantly, to put away my present queen, and to take another consort, by whom I trust to raise up a worthy successor, and inheritor of my kingdom."

A murmur of applause followed this speech, and the two cardinals exchanged significant glances, which were not unobserved by the king.

"I doubt not ye will all approve the choice I shall make," he pursued, looking fiercely at Wolsey, and taking Anne Boleyn's hand, who arose as he turned to her. "And now, fair mistress," he added to her, "as an earnest of the

regard I have for you, and of the honors I intend you, I hereby create you Marchioness of Pembroke, and bestow upon you a thousand marks a year in land, and another thousand to be paid out of my treasury to support your dignity."

"Your majesty is too generous," replied Anne, bending the knee, and kissing his hand.

"Not a whit, sweetheart—not a whit," replied Henry, tenderly raising her; "this is but a slight mark of my good will. Sir Thomas Boleyn," he added, to her father, "henceforth your style and title will be that of Viscount Rochford, and your patent will be made out at the same time as that of your daughter the Marchioness of Pembroke. I also elect you a knight-companion of the most honorable Order of the Garter, and your investiture and installation will take place to day."

Having received the thanks and homage of the newly-created noble, Henry descended from the canopy, and passed into an inner room with the Lady Anne, where a collation was prepared for them. Their slight meal over, Anne took up her lute, and playing a lively prelude, sang two or three French songs with so much skill and grace, that Henry, who was passionately fond of music, was quite enraptured. Two delightful hours having passed by, almost imperceptibly, an usher approached the king, and whispering a few words to him, he reluctantly withdrew, and Anne retired with her ladies to an inner apartment.

On reaching his closet, the king's attendants proceeded to array him in a surcoat of crimson velvet, powdered with garters embroidered in silk and gold, with the motto,—Honi soit qui mal y pense,—wrought within them. Over the surcoat was thrown a mantle of blue velvet with a magnificent train, lined with white damask, and having on the left shoulder a large garter, wrought in pearls and

Venice twists, containing the motto, and encircling the arms of Saint George—argent, a cross gules. The royal habiliments were completed by a hood of the same stuff as the surcoat, decorated like it with small embroidered garters, and lined with white satin. From the king's neck was suspended the collar of the Great George, composed of pieces of gold, fashioned like garters, the ground of which was enameled, and the letters gold.

While Henry was thus arrayed, the knights-companions, robed in their mantles, hoods, and collars, entered the closet, and waiting till he was ready, marched before him into the presence-chamber, where were assembled the two provincial kings-at-arms, Clarenceux and Norroy, the heralds, and pursuivants, wearing their coats-of-arms, together with the band of pensioners, carrying gilt pole-axes, and drawn up in two lines. At the king's approach, one of the gentlemen-ushers who carried the sword of state, with the point resting upon the ground, delivered it to the Duke of Richmond,—the latter having been appointed to bear it before the king during all the proceedings of the feast. Meanwhile, the knights-companions having drawn up on either side of the canopy, Henry advanced with a slow and stately step towards it, his train borne by the Earl of Surrey, Sir Thomas Wyat, and other nobles and knights. As he ascended the canopy, and faced the assemblage, the Duke of Richmond and the chief officers of the order drew up a little on his right. The knights-companions then made their salutation to him, which he returned by removing his jeweled cap with infinite grace and dignity; and as soon as he was again covered, they put on their caps, and ranging themselves in order, set forward to Saint George's Chapel.

Quitting the royal lodgings, and passing through the gateway of the Norman Tower, the procession wound its

way along the base of the Round Tower, the battlements of which bristled with spearmen, as did the walls on the right, and the summit of the Winchester Tower, and crossing the middle-ward, skirted the tomb-house, then newly erected by Wolsey, and threading a narrow passage, between it and Saint George's Chapel, entered the northeast door of the latter structure.

Dividing, on their entrance into the chapel, into two lines, the attendants of the knights-companions flanked either side of the north aisle; while between them walked the alms-knights, the verger, the prebends of the college, and the officers-of-arms, who proceeded as far as the west door of the choir, where they stopped. A slight pause then ensued, after which, the king, the knights-companions, and the chief officers of the order, entered the chapter-house—a chamber situated at the northeast corner of the chapel—leaving the Duke of Richmond, the sword-bearer, Lord Rochford, the knight-elect, the train-bearers, and pensioners, outside. The door of the chapter-house being closed by the black-rod, the king proceeded to the upper end of the vestments'-board—as the table was designated,—where a chair, cushions, and cloth of state, were provided for him; the knights-companions, whose stalls in the choir were on the same side as his own, seating themselves on his right, and those whose posts were on the prince's side taking their places on the left. The prelate and the chancellor stood at the upper end of the table; the garter and register at the foot; while the door was kept by the black-rod.

As soon as the king and the knights were seated, intimation was given by an usher to the black-rod, that the newly-elected knight, Lord Rochford, was without. This intelligence being communicated to the king, he ordered the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk to bring him into his presence. The injunction was obeyed, and the knight-

elect presently made his appearance, the garter marching before him to the king. Bowing reverently to the sovereign, Rochford, in a brief speech, expressed his gratitude for the signal honor conferred upon him, and at its close, set his left foot upon a gilt stool, placed for him by the garter, who pronounced the following admonition :—" My good lord, the loving company of the Order of the Garter have received you as their brother and fellow. In token whereof, they give you this garter, which God grant you may receive and wear from henceforth, to His praise and glory, and to the exaltation and honor of the noble order and yourself."

Meanwhile, the garter was girded on the leg of the newly-elected knight, and buckled by the Duke of Suffolk. This done, he knelt before the king, who hung a gold chain, with the image of Saint George attached to it, about his neck, while another admonition was pronounced by the chancellor. Rochford then arose, bowed to the monarch, and to the knights-companions, who returned his salutations, and the investiture was complete.

Other affairs of the chapter were next discussed. Certain officers, nominated since the last meeting, were sworn; letters from absent knights-companions, praying to be excused from attendance, were read—and their pleas, except in the instance of Sir Thomas Cheney, allowed. After reading the excuse of the latter, Henry uttered an angry oath, declaring he would deprive him of his vote in the chapter-house, banish him from his stall, and mulct him a hundred marks, to be paid at Saint George's altar, when Will Sommers, who was permitted to be present, whispered in his ear that the offender was kept away by the devices of Wolsey, because he was known to be friendly to the divorce, and to the interests of the Lady Anne.

"Aha! by Saint Mary, is it so?" exclaimed Henry,

knitting his brows. "This shall be looked into. I have hanged a butcher just now. Let the butcher's son take warning by his fate. He has bearded me long enough. See that Sir Thomas Cheney be sent for with all dispatch. I will hear the truth from his own lips."

He then arose, and quitting the chapter-house, proceeded with the knights-companions to the choir,—the roof and walls of the sacred structure resounding with the solemn notes of the organ as they traversed the aisle. The first to enter the choir were the alms-knights, who passed through the door in a body, and making low obeisances toward the altar and the royal stall, divided into two lines. They were succeeded by the prebends of the college, who, making similar obeisances, stationed themselves in front of the benches before the stalls of the knights-companions. Next followed the pursuivants, heralds, and provincial kings-of-arms, making like reverences, and ranging themselves with the alms-knights. Then came the knights-companions, who performed double reverences like the others, and took their stations under their stalls; then came the black-rod, garter, and register, who having gone through the same ceremony as the others, proceeded to their form, which was placed on the south side of the choir before the sovereign's stall; then came the chancellor and prelate, whose form was likewise placed before the royal stall, but nearer to it than that allotted to the other officers; and lastly, Henry himself, with the sword borne before him by the Duke of Richmond, who, as he approached the steps of his stall, bowed reverently towards the altar, and made another obeisance before seating himself.

Meanwhile, the Duke of Richmond posted himself in front of the royal stall, the Earl of Oxford, as lord-chamberlain, taking his station on the king's right, and the Earl of Surrey, as vice-chamberlain, on the left. As

these arrangements were made, the two cardinals arrived, and proceeded to the altar.

Mass was then said, and nothing could be more striking than the appearance of the chapel during its performance. The glorious choir with its groined and pendent roof, its walls adorned with the richest stuffs, its exquisitely carved stalls, above which hung the banners of the knights-companions, together with their helmets, crests, and swords, its sumptuously-decorated altar, glittering with costly vessels, its pulpit hung with crimson damask interwoven with gold, the magnificent and varied dresses of the assemblage,—all these constituted a picture of surpassing splendor.

Vespers over, the king and his train departed with the same ceremonies, and in the same order as had been observed on their entrance of the choir.

On returning to the royal lodgings, Henry proceeded to his closet, where having divested himself of his mantle, he went in search of the Lady Anne. He found her walking with her dames on the stately terrace at the north of the castle, and the attendants retiring as he joined her, he was left at full liberty for amorous converse. After pacing the terrace for some time, he adjourned with Anne to her own apartments, where he remained till summoned to supper with the knight-companions in Saint George's Hall.

The next morning betimes, it being the day of the patron saint of the Order of the Garter, a numerous cavalcade assembled in the upper ward of the castle, to conduct the king to hear matins in Saint George's Chapel. In order to render the sight as imposing as possible, Henry had arranged that the procession should take place on horseback, and the whole of the retinue were accordingly mounted. The large quadrangle was filled with steeds and their attendants, and the castle wall re-

sounded with the fanfares of trumpets, and the beating of kettle-drums. The most attractive feature of the procession in the eyes of the beholders was the Lady Anne, who, mounted on a snow-white palfrey richly trapped, rode on the right of the king. She was dressed in a rich gown of raised cloth of gold; and had a coronet of black velvet, decorated with orient pearls, on her head. Never had she looked so lovely as on this occasion, and the king's passion increased as he gazed upon her. Henry himself was more sumptuously attired than on the preceding day. He wore a robe of purple velvet made somewhat like a frock, embroidered with flat damask gold, and small lace intermixed. His doublet was very curiously embroidered, the sleeves and breast being lined with cloth of gold, and fastened with great buttons of diamonds and rubies. His sword and girdle were adorned with magnificent emeralds, and his bonnet glistened with precious stones. His charger was trapped in cloth of gold, traversed lattice-wise, square, embroidered with gold damask, pearled on every side, and having buckles and pendants of fine gold. By his side ran ten footmen, richly attired in velvet and goldsmiths' work. They were followed by the pages of honor, mounted on great horses, trapped in crimson velvet embroidered with new devices and knots of gold.

In this state, Henry and his favorite proceeded to the great western door of Saint George's Chapel. Here twelve gentlemen of the privy-chamber attended with a canopy of cloth of gold, which they bore over the king's head, and that of the Lady Anne, as she walked beside him to the entrance of the choir, where they separated—he proceeding to his stall, and she to a closet at the northeast corner of the choir over the altar, while her ladies repaired to one adjoining it.

Matins then commenced, and at the appointed part of

the service, the dean of the college took a silver box, containing the heart of Saint George, bestowed upon King Henry the Fifth by the Emperor Sigismund, and after incense had been shed upon it by one of the canons, presented it to the king and the knights-companions to kiss.

After the offertory, a carpet was spread on the steps before the altar, the alms-knights, pursuivants, and heralds stationing themselves on either side of it. The garter then descended from his seat, and waving his rod, the knights-companions descended likewise, but remained before their stalls. The black-rod next descended, and proceeding towards the altar, a groom of the wardrobe brought him a small carpet of cloth of gold, and a cushion of the same stuff, which were placed on the larger carpet, the cushion being set on the head of the steps. Taking a large gilt bason to receive the offerings, the prelate stationed himself with one of the prebends in the midst of the altar. The king then rose from his stall, and making a reverence as before, proceeded to the altar attended by the garter, register, and chancellor, together with the Duke of Richmond, bearing the sword, and having reached the upper step, prostrated himself on the cushion, while the black-rod bending the knee delivered a chain of gold, intended afterwards to be redeemed, to the Duke of Suffolk, who was appointed to make the royal offering, and who placed it in the bason held by the prelate. This ceremony over, the king got up, and with similar reverences returned to his stall. Then the two provincial kings, Clarenceux and Norroy, proceeded along the choir, and making due reverences to the altar and the sovereign, bowed to the two senior knights, who thereupon advanced towards the altar, and kneeling down, made their offering. The others imitated their example, coming forward according to their seniority.

The service ended, the officers and knights-companions quitted the chapel in the same order they had entered it, the king being received under the canopy at the door of the choir, and passing through the west entrance of the chapel, where he waited for the Lady Anne. On her arrival, they both mounted their steeds, and rode up to the royal lodgings amid flourishes of trumpets and acclamations. Dismounting at the great gate, Henry proceeded to the presence-chamber, where the knights-companions had assembled, and having received their salutations, retired to his closet. Here he remained in deep consultation with the Duke of Suffolk for some hours, when it having been announced to him that the first course of the banquet was served, he came forth, and proceeded to the presence-chamber, where he greeted the knights-companions, who were there assembled, and who immediately put themselves in order of procession. After this, the alms-knights, prebends, and officers of arms, passed on through the guard-chamber into Saint George's Hall. They were followed by the knights-companions, who drew up in double file, the seniors taking the uppermost place; and through these lines the king passed, his train borne up as before, until reaching the table set apart for him, beneath a canopy, he turned round, and received the knights' reverences. The Earl of Oxford, as vice-chamberlain, then brought him a ewer containing water, the Earl of Surrey a basin, and Lord Rochford a napkin. Henry having performed his ablutions, grace was said by the prelate, after which the king seated himself beneath the canopy in an ancient chair with a curiously-carved back representing the exploit of Saint George, which had once belonged to the founder, King Edward the Third, and called up the two cardinals, who by this time had entered the hall, and who remained standing beside him, one on either hand, during the repast.

As soon as the king was seated, the knights-companions put on their caps, and retired to the table prepared for them, on the right side of the hall, where they seated themselves, according to their degree;—the Duke of Richmond occupying the first place, the Duke of Suffolk the second, and the Duke of Norfolk the third. On the opposite side of the hall was a long beaufet covered with flasks of wine, meats, and dishes, for the service of the knights' table. Before this stood the attendants, near whom were drawn up two lines of pensioners bearing the second course on great gilt dishes, and headed by the sewer. In front of the sewer were the treasurer, and comptroller of the household, each bearing a white wand. Next them stood the officers-of-arms, in two lines, headed by the garter. The bottom of the hall was thronged with yeomen of the guard, halberdiers, and henchmen. In a gallery at the lower end were stationed a band of minstrels; and near them sat the Lady Anne and her dames to view the proceedings.

The appearance of the hall during the banquet was magnificent; the upper part being hung with arras representing the legend of Saint George, placed there by Henry the Sixth; and the walls behind the knights-companions adorned with other tapestries and rich stuffs.

The tables groaned with the weight of dishes, some of which may be enumerated for the benefit of modern gastronomers. There were Georges on horseback, chickens in brewis, cygnets, capons of high grease, carpes of venison, herons, calvered salmon, custards planted with garters, tarts closed with arms, godwits, peafowl, halibut engrailed, porpoise in armor, pickled mullets, perch in foyle, venison pasties, hypocras jelly, and mainemy royal.

Before the second course was served, the garter, followed by Clarenceux and Norroy, together with the heralds and pursuivants, advanced towards the sover-

eign's canopy, and cried thrice, in a loud voice, "Largesse!"

Upon this, all the knights-companions arose and took off their caps. The garter then proceeded to proclaim the king's titles in Latin and French, and lastly in English, as follows:—"Of the most high, most excellent, and most mighty monarch, Henry the Eighth, by the grace of God, King of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and sovereign of the most noble Order of the Garter."

This proclamation made, the treasurer of the household put ten golden marks into the garter's cap, who making a reverence to the sovereign, retired from the hall with his followers.

"Come, my lord legate," said Henry, when this ceremony was at an end; "we will drink to my future queen. What ho! wine!" he added, to the Earl of Surrey, who officiated as cup-bearer.

"Your highness is not yet divorced from your present consort," replied Campeggio. "If it please you I should prefer drinking the health of Catherine of Aragon."

"Well, as your eminence pleases," replied the king, taking the goblet from the hand of Surrey; "I shall not constrain you."

And looking towards the gallery, he fixed his eyes on the Lady Anne, and drained the cup to the last drop.

"Would it were poison," muttered Sir Thomas Wyat, who stood behind the Earl of Surrey, and witnessed what was passing,

"Give not thy treasonable thoughts vent, gossip," said Will Sommers, who formed one of the group near the royal table, "or it may chance that some one less friendly-disposed towards thee than myself may overhear them. I tell thee, the Lady Anne is lost to thee forever. Think'st thou aught of womankind would hesitate

between a simple knight and a king? My lord duke," he added, sharply, to Richmond, who was looking round at him, "you would rather be in yonder gallery than here."

"Why so, knave?" asked the duke.

"Because the fair Geraldine is there," replied the jester. "And yet your grace is not the person she would most desire to have with her."

"Whom would she prefer?" inquired the duke, angrily.

The jester nodded at Surrey, and laughed maliciously.

"You heard the health given by the king just now, my lord," observed the Duke of Suffolk to his neighbor the Duke of Norfolk; "it was a shrewd hint to the lord legate which way his judgment should incline. Your niece will assuredly be queen of England."

"I did not note what was said, my lord," replied Norfolk; "I pray you repeat it to me."

Suffolk complied, and they continued in close debate until the termination of the banquet, when the king having saluted the company, returned to the presence-chamber.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE GHOSTLY CHASE BEHELD BY THE EARL OF SURREY AND THE DUKE OF RICHMOND, IN WINDSOR FOREST.

On that same night, and just as the castle clock was on the stroke of twelve, the Earl of Surrey and the Duke of Richmond issued from the upper gate, and took their way towards Herne's oak. The moon was shining brightly, and its beams silvered the foliage of the noble trees with which the park was studded. The youthful friends soon reached the blasted tree; but nothing was to be seen near it, and all looked so tranquil, so free from malignant influence, that the Duke of Richmond could not help laughing at his companion, telling him that the supposed vision must have been the offspring of his over-excited fancy. Angry at being thus doubted, the earl walked off, and plunged into the haunted dell. The duke followed, but though they paused for some time beneath the gnarled oak tree, the spirit did not appear.

"And thus ends the adventure of Herne the hunter!" laughed the duke, as they emerged from the brake. "By my halidom, Surrey, I am grievously disappointed. You must have mistaken some large stag, caught by its antlers in the branches of the oak tree, for the demon."

"I have told you precisely what occurred," replied Surrey, angrily. "Ha! there he is—look! look!"

And he pointed to a weird figure, mounted on a steed as weird-looking as itself, galloping through the trees with extraordinary swiftness, at a little distance from them. This ghostly rider wore the antlered helmet described by Surrey, and seemed to be habited in a garb

of deer skins. Before him flew a large owl, and a couple of great black dogs ran beside him. Staring in speechless wonder at the sight, the two youths watched the mysterious being scour a glade brightly illumined by the moon, until reaching the pales marking the confines of the Home Park, he leaped them, and disappeared.

"What think you of that?" cried Surrey, as soon as he had recovered from his surprise, glancing triumphantly at the duke. "Was that the offspring of my fancy?"

"It was a marvelous sight, truly!" exclaimed Richmond. "Would we had our steeds to follow him!"

"We can follow him on foot," replied the earl—"he is evidently gone into the forest."

And they set off at a quick pace in the direction taken by the ghostly rider. Clambering the park pales, they crossed the road leading to Old Windsor, and entered that part of the forest which, in more recent times, has been enclosed and allotted to the grounds of Frogmore. Tracking a long vista, they came to a thick dell, overgrown with large oaks, at the bottom of which lay a small pool. Fleeter than his companion, and therefore somewhat in advance of him, the Earl of Surrey, as he approached this dell, perceived the spectral huntsman and his dogs standing at the edge of the water. The earl instantly shouted to him, and the horseman turning his head, shook his hand menacingly, while the hounds glared fiercely at the intruder, and displayed their fangs, but did not bark. As Surrey, however, despite this caution, continued to advance, the huntsman took a strangely-shaped horn that hung by his side, and placing it to his lips, flames and thick smoke presently issued from it, and before the vapor had cleared off, he and his dogs had disappeared. The witnesses of this marvelous spectacle crossed themselves reverently, and descended to the brink of the pool; but the numerous footprints of deer,

that came there to drink, prevented them from distinguishing any marks of the steed of the ghostly hunter.

"Shall we return, Surrey?" asked the duke.

"No," replied the earl; "I am persuaded we shall see the mysterious huntsman again. You can return, if you think proper. I will go on."

"Nay, I will not leave you," rejoined Richmond.

And they set off again at the same quick pace as before. Mounting a hill covered with noble beeches and elms, a magnificent view of the castle burst upon them, towering over the groves they had tracked, and looking almost like the work of enchantment. Charmed with the view, the young men continued to contemplate it for some time. They then struck off on the right, and ascended still higher, until they came to a beautiful grove of beeches cresting the hill where the equestrian statue of George the Third is now placed. Skirting this grove, they disturbed a herd of deer, which started up, and darted into the valley below.

At the foot of two fine beech-trees lay another small pool, and Surrey almost expected to see the spectral huntsman beside it.

From this spot they could discern the whole of the valley beyond, and they scanned it in the hope of perceiving the object of their search. Though not comparable to the view on the nearer side, the prospect was nevertheless exceedingly beautiful. Long vistas and glades stretched out before them, while in the far distance might be seen glittering in the moonbeams the lake or mere, which in later days has received the name of Virginia Water.

While they were gazing at this scene, a figure habited like a keeper of the forest suddenly emerged from the trees at the lower end of one of the glades. Persuaded that this person had some mysterious connection with the

ghostly huntsman, the earl determined to follow him, and hastily mentioning his suspicions and design to Richmond, he hurried down the hill. But before he accomplished the descent, the keeper was gone. At length, however, on looking about, they perceived him mounting the rising ground on the left, and immediately started after him, taking care to keep out of sight. The policy of this course was soon apparent. Supposing himself no longer pursued, the keeper relaxed his pace, and the others got nearer to him.

In this way both parties went on, the keeper still hurrying forward, every now and then turning his head to see whether any one was on his track, until he came to a road cut through the trees, that brought him to the edge of a descent leading to the lake. Just at this moment, a cloud passed over the moon, burying all in comparative obscurity. The watchers, however, could perceive the keeper approach an ancient beech-tree of enormous growth, and strike it thrice with the short hunting-spear which he held in his grasp.

The signal remaining unanswered, he quitted the tree, and shaped his course along the side of a hill on the right. Keeping under the shelter of the thicket on the top of the same hill, Surrey and Richmond followed, and saw him direct his steps towards another beech-tree of almost double the girth of that he had just visited. Arrived at this mighty tree, he struck it with his spear, while a large owl, seated on a leafless branch, began to hoot; a bat circled the tree; and two large snakes, glistening in the moonlight, glided from its roots. As the tree was stricken for the third time, the same weird figure that the watchers had seen ride along the home park burst from its rifted trunk, and addressed its summoner in tones apparently menacing and imperious, but whose import was lost upon the listeners. The curiosity of the beholders was roused

to the highest pitch; but an undefinable awe prevented them from rushing forward.

Suddenly, the demon-hunter waved a pike with which he was armed, and uttered a peculiar cry, resembling the hooting of an owl. At this sound, and as if by magic, a couple of steeds, accompanied by the two hounds, started from the brake. In an instant, the demon huntsman vaulted upon the back of the horse nearest to him, and the keeper almost as quickly mounted the other. The pair then galloped off through the glen, the owl flying before them, and the hounds coursing by their side.

The two friends gazed at each other, for some time, in speechless wonder. Taking heart, they then descended to the haunted tree, but could perceive no traces of the strange being by whom it had been recently tenanted. After a while, they retraced their course towards the castle, hoping they might once more encounter the wild huntsmen. Nor were they disappointed. As they crossed a glen, a noble stag darted by. Close at its heels came the two black hounds, and after them the riders hurrying forward at a furious pace, their steeds appearing to breathe forth flame and smoke.

In an instant, the huntsmen and hounds were gone, and the trampling of the horses died away in the distance. Soon afterwards, a low sound, like the winding of a horn, broke upon the ear, and the listeners had no doubt that the buck was brought down. They hurried in the direction of the sound, but though the view was wholly unobstructed for a considerable distance, they could see nothing of either horsemen, hounds, or deer.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW THE FAIR GERALDINE BESTOWED A RELIC UPON HER LOVER.—HOW SURREY AND RICHMOND RODE IN THE FOREST AT MIDNIGHT,—AND WHERE THEY FOUND THE BODY OF MARK FYTTON, THE BUTCHER.

Surrey and Richmond agreed to say nothing for the present of their mysterious adventure in the forest; but their haggard looks, as they presented themselves to the Lady Anne Boleyn in the reception-chamber, on the following morning, proclaimed that something had happened, and they had to undergo much questioning from the fair Geraldine and the Lady Mary Howard.

"I never saw you so out of spirits, my lord," remarked the fair Geraldine to Surrey; "you must have spent the whole night in study—or what is more profitable, you have again seen Herne the hunter. Confess now, you have been in the forest."

"I will confess anything you please," replied Surrey, evasively.

"And what have you seen?—a stranger vision than the first?" rejoined the fair Geraldine.

"Since your ladyship answers for me, there is no need for explanation on my part," rejoined Surrey, with a faint laugh. "And know you not, that those who encounter supernatural beings are generally bound to profound secrecy?"

"Such, I hope, is not your case, Henry?" cried the Lady Mary Howard, in alarm;—"nor yours, my lord?" she added, to the Duke of Richmond.

"I am bound equally with Surrey," returned the Duke, mysteriously.

"You pique my curiosity, my lords," said the fair Geraldine; "and since there is no other way of gratifying it, if the Lady Mary Howard will accompany me, we will ourselves venture into the forest, and try whether we cannot have a meeting with this wild huntsman. Shall we go to-night?"

"Not for worlds," replied the Lady Mary, shuddering; "were I to see Herne, I should die of fright."

"Your alarm is groundless," observed Richmond, gallantly. "The presence of two beings, fair and pure as yourself and the Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, would scare away aught of evil."

The Lady Mary thanked him with a beaming smile, but the fair Geraldine could not repress a slight laugh.

"Your grace is highly flattering," she said. "But, with all faith in beauty and purity, I should place most reliance in a relic I possess,—the virtue of which has often been approved against evil spirits. It was given by a monk—who had been sorely tempted by a demon, and who owed his deliverance to it—to my ancestor, Luigi Geraldi of Florence; and from him it descended to me."

"Would I had an opportunity of proving its efficacy!" exclaimed the Earl of Surrey.

"You shall prove it, if you choose," rejoined the fair Geraldine. "I will give you the relic, on condition that you never part with it to friend or foe."

And detaching a small cross of gold, suspended by a chain from her neck, she presented it to the Earl of Surrey.

"This cross encloses the relic," she continued; "wear it, and may it protect you from all ill!"

Surrey's pale cheek glowed as he took the gift.

"I will never part with it but with life!" he cried, pressing the cross to his lips, and afterwards placing it next his heart.

"I would have given half my dukedom to be so favored," said Richmond, moodily.

And quitting the little group, he walked towards the Lady Anne.

"Henry," said the Lady Mary, taking her brother aside; "you will lose your friend."

"I care not," replied Surrey.

"But you may incur his enmity," pursued the Lady Mary. "I saw the glance he threw at you just now, and it was exactly like the king's terrible look when offended."

"Again I say I care not," replied Surrey. "Armed with this relic, I defy all hostility."

"It will avail little against Richmond's rivalry and opposition," rejoined his sister.

"We shall see," retorted Surrey. "Were the king himself my rival, I would not resign my pretensions to the fair Geraldine!"

"Bravely resolved, my lord," said Sir Thomas Wyat, who having overheard the exclamation, advanced towards him. "Heaven grant you may never be placed in such jeopardy!"

"I say amen to that prayer, Sir Thomas," rejoined Surrey. "I would not prove disloyal, and yet under such circumstances——"

"What would you do?" interrupted Wyat.

"My brother is but a hasty boy, and has not learned discretion, Sir Thomas," interposed the Lady Mary, trying by a significant glance to impose silence on the Earl.

"Young as he is, he loves well, and truly," remarked Wyat, in a somber tone.

"What is all this?" inquired the fair Geraldine, who had been gazing through the casement into the court below.

"I was merely expressing a wish that Surrey may never have a monarch for a rival, fair lady," replied Wyat.

"It matters little who may be his rival," rejoined Geraldine, "provided she he loves be constant."

"Right, lady, right," said Wyat, with great bitterness.

At this moment, Will Sommers approached them.

"I come to bid you to the Lady Anne's presence, Sir Thomas, and you to the king's, my lord of Surrey," said the jester. "I noticed what has just taken place," he remarked to the latter, as they proceeded towards the royal canopy, beneath which Henry and the Lady Anne Boleyn were seated; "but Richmond will not relinquish her tamely, for all that."

Anne Boleyn had summoned Sir Thomas Wyat, in order to gratify her vanity, by showing him the unbounded influence she possessed over his royal rival; and the half-suppressed agony displayed by the unfortunate lover at the exhibition, afforded her a pleasure such as only the most refined coquette can feel.

Surrey was sent for by the king to receive instructions in his quality of vice-chamberlain, respecting a tilting-match and hunting-party to be held on successive days, —the one in the upper quadrangle of the castle, the other in the forest.

Anxious, now that he was somewhat calmer, to avoid a rupture with Richmond, Surrey, as soon as he had received the king's instructions, drew near the duke; and the latter, who had likewise reasoned himself out of his resentment, was speedily appeased, and they became, to all appearance, as good friends as ever.

Soon afterwards, the Lady Anne and her dames retired, and the court breaking up, the two young nobles strolled forth to the stately terrace at the north of the castle, where while gazing at the glorious view it commanded, they talked over the mysterious event of the previous night.

"I cannot help suspecting that the keeper we beheld

with the demon-hunter, was Morgan Fenwolf," remarked the earl. "Suppose we make inquiry whether he was at home last night. We can readily find out his dwelling from Bryan Bowntance, the host of the Garter."

Richmond acquiesced in the proposal, and they accordingly proceeded to the cloisters of Saint George's Chapel, and threading some tortuous passages contrived among the canons' houses, passed through a small porch, guarded by a sentinel, and opening upon a precipitous and somewhat dangerous flight of steps, hewn out of the rock, and leading to the town.

None except the more important members of the royal household were allowed to use this means of exit from the castle; but of course the privilege extended to Richmond and Surrey. Here in later times, and when the castle was not so strictly guarded, a more convenient approach was built, and designated, from the number of its stairs, "The hundred steps."

Having accomplished the descent in safety, and given the pass-word to the sentinel at the foot of the steps, the two young nobles emerged into the street, and the first object they beheld was the body of the miserable butcher swinging from the summit of the Curfew Tower, where it was left by order of the king.

Averting their gaze from this ghastly spectacle, they took their way up Thames Street, and soon reached the Garter. Honest Bryan was seated on a bench before the dwelling, with a flagon of his own ale beside him, and rising as he saw the others approach, he made them a profound salutation.

On learning what they sought, he told them that Morgan Fenwolf dwelt in a small cottage by the river side, not far from the bridge, and if it pleased them, he would guide them to it himself,—an offer which they gladly accepted.

"Do you know anything of this Fenwolf?" asked Surrey, as they proceeded on their way.

"Nothing particular," replied Bryan, with some hesitation; "there are some strange reports about him, but I don't believe 'em."

"What reports are they, friend?" asked the Duke of Richmond.

"Why, your grace, one ought to be cautious what one says, for fear of bringing an innocent man into trouble," returned the host. "But if the truth must be spoken, people *do* say that Morgan Fenwolf is in league with the devil—or with Herne the hunter, which is the same thing."

Richmond exchanged a look with his friend.

"Folks say strange sights have been seen in the forest, of late," pursued Bryan—"and it may be so. But I myself have seen nothing,—but then, to be sure, I never go there. The keepers used to talk of Herne the hunter when I was a lad—but I believe it was only a tale to frighten deer-stealers; and I fancy it's much the same thing now."

Neither Surrey nor Richmond made any remark, and they presently reached the keeper's dwelling.

It was a small wooden tenement, standing, as the host had stated, on the bank of the river, about a bow-shot from the bridge. The door was opened by Bryan, and the party entered without further ceremony. They found no one within except an old woman, with harsh, wrinkled features, and a glance as ill-omened as that of a witch, whom Bryan Bowntance told them was Fenwolf's mother. This old crone regarded the intruders uneasily.

"Where is your son, dame?" demanded the duke.

"On his walk in the forest," replied the old crone, bluntly.

"What time did he go forth?" inquired Surrey.

"An hour before daybreak, as is his custom," returned the woman, in the same short tone as before.

"You are sure he slept at home last night, dame?" said Surrey.

"As sure as I am that the question is asked me," she replied. "I can show you the very bed on which he slept, if you desire to see it. He retired soon after sunset—slept soundly, as he always sleeps—and arose as I have told you. I lighted a fire, and made him some hot pottage myself."

"If she speaks the truth, you must be mistaken," observed Richmond, in a whisper, to his friend.

"I do not believe her," replied Surrey, in the same tone. "Show us his chamber, dame."

The old crone sullenly complied, and throwing open a side door, disclosed an inner apartment, in which there was a small bed. There was nothing noticeable in the room, except a couple of fishing-nets, a hunting-spear, and an old crossbow. A small open casement looked upon the river, whose clear sparkling waters flowed immediately beneath it.

Surrey approached the window, and obtained a fine view of the Brocas meads on the one hand, and the embowered college of Eton on the other. His attention, however, was diverted by a fierce barking without; and the next moment, in spite of the vociferations of the old woman, a large, black stag-hound, which Surrey recognized as Fenwolf's dog, Bawsey, burst through the door, and rushed furiously towards him. Surrey drew his dagger to defend himself from the hound's attack; but the precaution was needless. Bawsey's fierceness changed suddenly to the most abject submission, and with a terrified howl, she retreated from the room with her tail between her legs. Even the old woman uttered a cry of surprise.

"Lord help us!" exclaimed Bryan—"was ever the like o' that seen. Your lordship must have a strange mastery over dogs. That hound," he added, in a whisper, "is said to be a familiar spirit."

"The virtue of the relic is approved," observed Surrey, to Richmond, in an under tone.

"It would seem so," replied the duke.

The old woman now thought proper to assume a more respectful demeanor towards her visitors, and inquired whether her son should attend upon them on his return from the forest; but they said it was unnecessary.

"The king is about to have a grand hunting-party the day after to-morrow," observed Surrey, "and we wished to give your son some instructions respecting it. They can, however, be delivered to another keeper."

And they departed with Bryan, and returned to the castle.

At midnight, they again issued forth. Their steeds awaited them near the upper gate, and mounting, they galloped across the greensward in the direction of Herne's Oak. Discerning no trace of the ghostly huntsman, they shaped their course towards the forest.

Urging their steeds to their utmost speed, and skirting the long avenue, they did not draw the rein till they reached the eminence beyond it; having climbed which, they dashed down the further side, at the same swift pace as before. The ride greatly excited them; but they saw nothing of the wild huntsman; nor did any sound salute their ears, except the tramp of their own horses, or the occasional darting forth of a startled deer.

Less than a quarter of an hour brought them to the haunted beech-tree. But all was as silent and solitary here as at the blasted oak. In vain Surrey smote the tree. No answer was returned to the summons, and finding all efforts to evoke the demon fruitless, they quitted the spot,

and turning their horses' heads to the right, slowly ascended the hillside.

Before they had gained the brow of the hill, the faint blast of a horn saluted their ears, apparently proceeding from the valley, near the lake. They instantly stopped, and looked in that direction, but could see nothing. Presently, however, the blast was repeated more loudly than before, and, guided by the sound, they discerned the spectral huntsman riding beneath the trees at some quarter of a mile's distance.

Striking spurs into their steeds, they instantly gave him chase; but though he lured them on through thicket, and over glade—now climbing a hill, now plunging into a valley, until their steeds began to show symptoms of exhaustion—they got no nearer to him; and at length, as they drew near the Home Park, to which he had gradually led them, he disappeared from view.

"I will take my station near the blasted oak," said Surrey, galloping towards it, "the demon is sure to revisit his favorite tree before cockcrowing."

"What is that?" cried the Earl of Surrey, pointing to a strange and ghastly-looking object depending from the tree. "Some one has hanged himself! It may be the caitiff, Morgan Fenwolf."

With one accord they dashed forward; and as they drew nearer the tree, they perceived that the object that had attracted their attention was the body of Mark Fytton, the butcher, which they had so recently seen swinging from the summit of the Curfew Tower. It was now suspended from an arm of the wizard oak.

A small scroll was stuck upon the breast of the corpse, and, taking it off, Surrey read these words, traced in uncouth characters: "*Mark Fytton is now one of the band of Herne the Hunter.*"

"By my fay, this passes all comprehension," said

Richmond, after a few moments' silence. "This castle and forest seem under the sway of the powers of darkness. Let us return. I have had enough of adventure for to-night."

And he rode towards the castle, followed more slowly by the earl.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE EARL OF SURREY AND THE FAIR GERALDINE PLIGHTED THEIR TROTH IN THE CLOISTERS OF SAINT GEORGE'S CHAPEL.

Barriers were erected on the following day in the upper ward of the castle, and the Lady Anne and her dames assembled in the balcony in front of the royal lodgings, which was decorated with arras, costly carpets, and rich stuffs, to view the spectacle.

Perfect in all manly accomplishments, Henry splintered several lances with his brother-in-law, the Duke of Suffolk, who formed an admirable match for him in point of weight and strength; and at last, though he did not succeed in unhorsing the duke, he struck off his helmet, the clasp of which, it was whispered, was left designedly unfastened; and being thereupon declared the victor, he received the prize—a scarf embroidered by her own hands—from the fair Anne herself.

He then retired from the lists, leaving them free for the younger knights to run a course at the ring. The first to enter the arena was Sir Thomas Wyat; and as he was known to be a skilful jouster, it was expected he would come off triumphantly. But a glance from the royal balcony rendered his arm unsteady, and he missed the mark.

Next came the Duke of Richmond, superbly accoutered. Laughing at Wyat's ill-success, he bowed to the fair Geraldine, and taking a lance from his esquire, placed it in the rest, and rode gallantly forward. But he was equally unsuccessful, and retired, looking deeply chagrined.

The third knight who presented himself was Surrey. Mounted on his favorite black Arabian—a steed which, though of fiery temper, obeyed his slightest movement. His light symmetrical figure was seen to the greatest advantage in his close-fitting habiliments of silk and velvet. Without venturing a look at the royal balcony, the earl couched his lance, and bounding forward, bore away the ring on its point.

Amid the plaudits of the spectators, he then careered round the arena, and approaching the royal balcony, raised his lance, and proffered the ring to the fair Geraldine, who blushingly received it. Henry, though by no means pleased with Surrey's success, earned as it was at the expense of his son, complimented him upon his skill, and Anne Boleyn joined warmly in his praises.

The lists were then closed, and the royal party retired to partake of refreshments, after which they proceeded to the butts erected in the broad mead at the north of the castle, where the Duke of Shoreditch and his companions shot a well-contested match with the long bow.

During these sports, Surrey placed himself as near as he could to the fair Geraldine, and though but few opportunities occurred of exchanging a syllable with her, his looks spoke a sufficiently intelligible language. At last, just as they were about to return to the palace, he breathed in an imploring tone in her ear—

"You will attend vespers at Saint George's Chapel this evening. Return through the cloisters. Grant me a moment's interview alone there."

"I cannot promise," replied the fair Geraldine.

And she followed in the train of the Lady Anne.

The earl's request had not been unheard. As the royal train proceeded towards the castle, Will Sommers contrived to approach the Duke of Richmond, and said to him, in a jeering tone,—

"You ran but indifferently at the ring to-day, gossip. The galliard Surrey rode better, and carried off the prize."

"Pest on thee, scurril knave, be silent!" cried Richmond, angrily. "Failure is bad enough without thy taunts!"

"If you had only missed the ring, gossip, I should have thought nothing of it," pursued Will Sommers; "but you lost a golden opportunity of ingratiating yourself with your lady-love. All your hopes are now at an end. A word in your ear. The fair Geraldine will meet Surrey alone, this evening."

"Thou liest, knave!" cried the duke, fiercely.

"Your grace will find the contrary, if you will be at Wolsey's tomb-house at vesper-time," replied the jester.

"I will be there," replied the Duke; "but if I am brought on a bootless errand, not even my royal father shall save thee from chastisement."

"I will bear any chastisement your grace may choose to inflict upon me, if I prove not the truth of my assertion," replied Sommers. And he dropped into the rear of the train.

The two friends, as if by mutual consent, avoided each other during the rest of the day—Surrey feeling he could not unburden his heart to Richmond, and Richmond brooding jealously over the intelligence he had received from the jester.

At the appointed hour, the duke proceeded to the lower ward, and stationed himself near Wolsey's tomb-house. Just as he arrived there, the vesper hymn arose from the adjoining fane, and its solemn strains somewhat soothed his troubled spirit. But they died away; and as the jester came not, Richmond grew impatient, and began to fear he had been duped by his informant. At length, the service concluded, and, losing all patience, he was about to depart, when the jester peered round the lower angle

of the tomb-house, and beckoned to him. Obeying the summons, the duke followed his conductor down the arched passage leading to the cloisters.

"Tread softly, gossip, or you will alarm them," said Sommers, in a low tone.

They turned the corner of the cloisters; and there, near the entrance of the chapel, stood the youthful pair, —the fair Geraldine, half reclining upon the earl's breast, while his arm encircled her slender waist.

"There!" whispered the jester, chuckling maliciously —"there! did I speak falsely—eh! gossip?"

Richmond laid his hand upon his sword.

"Hist!" said the jester—"hear what the fair Geraldine has to say."

"We must meet no more thus, Surrey," she murmured: "I feel I was wrong in granting the interview, but I could not help it. If, when a few more years have flown over your head, your heart remains unchanged——"

"It will never change!" interrupted Surrey. "I here solemnly pledge my troth to you."

"And I return the pledge," replied the fair Geraldine, earnestly. "I vow to be yours, and yours only."

"Would that Richmond could hear your vow!" said Surrey—"it would extinguish his hopes."

"He *has* heard it!" cried the duke, advancing. "But his hopes are not yet extinguished."

The fair Geraldine uttered a slight scream, and disengaged herself from the earl.

"Richmond, you have acted unworthily in thus playing the spy," said Surrey, angrily.

"None but a spy can surprise interviews like these," rejoined Richmond, bitterly. "The Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald had better have kept her chamber, than come here to plight her troth with a boy, who will change his mind before his beard is grown."

"There," whispered the jester, "there, did I speak falsely—eh?"

—*Windsor Castle.*

"Your grace shall find the boy man enough to avenge an insult," rejoined Surrey, sternly.

"I am glad to hear it!" returned the duke. "Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, I must pray you to return to your lodgings. The king's jester will attend you. This way, my lord!"

Too much exasperated to hesitate, Surrey followed the duke down the passage, and the next moment, the clashing of swords was heard. The fair Geraldine screamed loudly, and Will Sommers began to think the jest had been carried too far.

"What is to be done?" he cried. "If the king hears of this quarrel, he will assuredly place the Earl of Surrey in arrest. I now repent having brought the duke here."

"You acted most maliciously," cried the fair Geraldine; "but fly, and prevent further mischief."

Thus urged, the jester ran towards the lower ward, and finding an officer of the guard and a couple of halberdiers near the entrance of Saint George's Chapel, told them what was taking place, and they immediately hastened with him to the scene of the conflict.

"My lords!" cried the officer to the combatants, "I command you to lay down your weapons."

But finding no respect paid to his injunctions, he rushed between them, and with the aid of the halberdiers, forcibly separated them.

"My lord of Surrey," said the officer, "you are my prisoner. I demand your sword."

"On what plea, sir?" rejoined the other.

"You have drawn it against the king's son—and the act is treason," replied the officer. "I shall take you to the guard-house until the king's pleasure is known."

"But I provoked the earl to the conflict," said Richmond; "I was the aggressor."

"Your grace will represent the matter as you see fit

to your royal father," rejoined the officer, "I shall fulfil my duty. My lord, to the guard-house!"

"I will procure your instant liberation, Surrey," said Richmond.

The earl was then led away, and conveyed to a chamber in the lower part of Henry the Eighth's gate, now used as a place of military punishment, and denominated the "black hole."

CHAPTER VIII.

OF TRISTRAM LYNDWOOD, THE OLD FORESTER, AND HIS GRANDDAUGHTER MABEL; OF THE PERIL IN WHICH THE LADY ANNE BOLEYN WAS PLACED DURING THE CHASE; AND BY WHOM SHE WAS RESCUED.

In consequence of the announcement that a grand hunting-party would be held in the forest, all the verderers, rangers, and keepers, assembled at an early hour on the fourth day after the king's arrival at Windsor, in an open space on the west side of the great avenue, where a wooden stand was erected, canopied over with green boughs and festooned with garlands of flowers, for the accommodation of the Lady Anne Boleyn and her dames, who, it was understood, would be present at the chase.

At a little distance from the stand, an extensive covert was fenced round with stout poles to which nets were attached, so as to form a haye or preserve, where the game intended for the royal sport was confined; and though many of the animals thus brought together were of hostile natures, they were all so terrified, and seemingly so conscious of the danger impending over them, that they did not molest each other. The foxes and martins, of which there were abundance, slunk into the brushwood with the hares and rabbits, but left their prey untouched. The harts made violent efforts to break forth, and, entangling their horns in the nets, were with difficulty extricated and driven back; while the timid does, not daring to follow them, stood warily watching the result of the struggle.

Amongst the antlered captives was a fine buck, which,

having been once before hunted by the king, was styled a "hart royal," and this noble animal would certainly have effected his escape, if he had not been attacked and driven back by Morgan Fenwolf, who throughout the morning's proceedings displayed great energy and skill. The compliments bestowed on Fenwolf for his address by the chief verderer excited the jealousy of some of his comrades; and more than one asserted that he had been assisted in his task by some evil being, and that Bawsey herself was no better than a familiar spirit in the form of a hound.

Morgan Fenwolf scouted these remarks; and he was supported by some others among the keepers, who declared that it required no supernatural aid to accomplish what he had done—that he was nothing more than a good huntsman, who could ride fast and boldly—that he was skilled in all the exercises of the chase—and possessed a stanch and well-trained hound.

The party then sat down to breakfast beneath the trees, and the talk fell upon Herne the hunter, and his frequent appearance of late in the forest (for most of the keepers had heard of, or encountered the spectral huntsman); and while they were discussing this topic, and a plentiful allowance of cold meat, bread, ale, and mead, at the same time, two persons were seen approaching along a vista on the right, who specially attracted their attention, and caused Morgan Fenwolf to drop the hunting-knife, with which he was carving his viands, and start to his feet.

The newcomers were an old man, and a comely young damsel. The former, though nearer seventy than sixty, was still hale and athletic; with fresh complexion, somewhat tanned by the sun, and a keen gray eye, which had lost nothing of its fire. He was habited in a stout leathern doublet, hose of the same material, and boots rudely fashioned out of untanned ox-hide, and drawn

above the knee. In his girdle was thrust a large hunting-knife; a horn with a silver mouthpiece, depended from his shoulder; and he wore a long bow, and a quiver full of arrows at his back. A flat bonnet, made of fox-skin, and ornamented with a raven's wing covered his hair, which was as white as silver.

But it was not upon this old forester, for such his attire proclaimed him, that the attention of the beholders, and of Morgan Fenwolf in especial, was fixed,—but upon his companion. Amongst the many lovely and high-born dames, who had so recently graced the procession to the castle, were few, if any, comparable to this lowly damsel. Her dress—probably owing to the pride felt in her by her old relative—was somewhat superior to her station. A tightly-laced green kirtle displayed to perfection her slight, but exquisitely-formed figure. A gown of orange-colored cloth, sufficiently short to display her small ankles, and a pair of green buskins, embroidered with silver, together with a collar of the whitest and finest linen, though shamed by the neck it concealed, and fastened by a small clasp, completed her attire. Her girdle was embroidered with silver, and her sleeves were fastened by aiglets of the same metal.

"How proud old Tristram Lyndwood seems of his granddaughter!" remarked one of the keepers.

"And with reason," replied another. "Mabel Lyndwood is the comeliest lass in Berkshire."

"Ay, marry is she," rejoined the first speaker; "and to my thinking, she is a fairer and sweeter flower than any that blooms in yon stately castle—the flower that finds so much favor in the eyes of our royal Hal not excepted."

"Have a care, Gabriel Lapp," observed another keeper. "Recollect that Mark Fytton, the butcher, was hanged for speaking slightingly of the Lady Anne Boleyn; and you may share his fate, if you disparage her beauty."

"Nay, I meant not to disparage the Lady Anne," replied Gabriel. "Hal may marry her when he will, and divorce her as soon afterwards as he pleases, for aught I care. If he marries fifty wives, I shall like him all the better. The more the merrier, say I. But if he sets eyes on Mab Lyndwood, it may somewhat unsettle his love for the Lady Anne."

"Tush, Gabriel!" said Morgan Fenwolf, darting an angry look at him. "What business have you to insinuate that the king would heed other than the lady of his love?"

"You are jealous, Morgan Fenwolf," rejoined Gabriel, with a malignant grin. "We all know you are in love with Mabel yourself."

"And we all know, likewise, that Mabel will have nothing to say to you!" cried another keeper, while the others laughed in chorus. "Come and sit down beside us, Morgan, and finish your breakfast."

But the keeper turned moodily away, and hied towards Tristram Lyndwood and his granddaughter. The old forester shook him cordially by the hand, and after questioning him as to what had taken place, and hearing how he had managed to drive the hart royal into the haye, clapped him on the shoulder, and said—"Thou art a brave huntsman, Morgan. I wish Mab could only think as well of thee as I do."

To this speech, Mabel not only paid no attention, but looked studiously another way.

"I am glad your grandfather has brought you out to see the chase to-day, Mabel," observed Morgan Fenwolf.

"I came not to see the chase, but the king," she replied, somewhat petulantly.

"It is not every fair maid who would confess so much," observed Fenwolf, frowning.

"Then I am franker than some of my sex," replied

Mabel. "But who is the strange man looking at us from behind that tree, grandfather?"

"I see no one," replied the old forester.

"Neither do I," added Morgan Fenwolf with a shudder.

"You are wilfully blind," rejoined Mabel. "But see, the person I mentioned stalks forth. Now, perhaps, he is visible to you both."

And as she spoke, a tall, wild-looking figure, armed with a hunting spear, emerged from the trees, and advanced towards them. The garb of the newcomer somewhat resembled that of a forester; but his arms and lower limbs were destitute of covering, and appeared singularly muscular, while his skin was swarthy as that of a gipsy. His jet black hair hung in elf-locks over his savage-looking features.

In another moment, he was beside them, and fixed his dark, piercing eyes on Mabel, in such a manner as to compel her to avert her gaze.

"What brings you here this morning, Tristram Lyndwood?" he demanded, in a hoarse, imperious tone.

"The same motive that brought you, Valentine Hagthorne," replied the old forester,—"to see the royal chase."

"This, I suppose, is your granddaughter?" pursued Hagthorne.

"Ay," replied Tristram, bluntly.

"Strange I should never have seen her before," rejoined the other. "She is very fair. Be ruled by me, friend Tristram—take her home again. If she sees the king, ill will come of it. You know, or should know, his character."

"Hagthorne advises well," interposed Fenwolf. "Mabel will be better at home."

"But she has no intention of returning at present," replied Mabel. "You brought me here for pastime, dear grandfather, and will not take me back at the recommendation of this strange man?"

"Content you, child—content you," replied Tristram, kindly. "You shall remain where you are."

"You will repent it!" cried Hagthorne.

And hastily darting among the trees, he disappeared from view.

Affecting to laugh at the occurrence, though evidently annoyed by it, the old forester led his granddaughter towards the stand, where he was cordially greeted by the keepers, most of whom, while expressing their pleasure at seeing him, strove to render themselves agreeable in the eyes of Mabel.

From this scene Morgan Fenwolf kept aloof, and remained leaning against a tree, with his eyes riveted upon the damsel. He was roused from his reverie by a slight tap upon the shoulder; and turning at the touch, beheld Valentine Hagthorne. Obedient to a sign from the latter, he followed him amongst the trees, and they both plunged into a dell.

An hour or two after this, when the sun was higher in the heavens, and the dew dried upon the greensward, the king, and a large company of lords and ladies, rode forth from the upper gate of the castle, and taking their way along the great avenue, struck off on the right, when about half way up it, and shaped their course towards the haye.

A goodly sight it was to see this gallant company riding beneath the trees; and pleasant was it, also, to listen to the blithe sound of their voices, amid which, Anne Boleyn's musical laugh could be plainly distinguished. Henry was attended by his customary band of archers and yeomen of the guard; and by the Duke of Shoreditch and his followers. On reaching the haye, the king dismounted, and assisting the Lady Anne from her steed, ascended the stand with her.

He then took a small and beautifully-fashioned bow from an attendant, and stringing it, presented it to her.

"I trust this will not prove too strong for your fair hands," he said.

"I will make shift to draw it," replied Anne, raising the bow, and gracefully pulling the string. "Would I could wound your majesty as surely as I shall hit the first roe that passes."

"That were a needless labor," rejoined Henry, "seeing that you have already stricken me to the heart. You should cure the wound you have already made, sweetheart—not inflict a new one."

At this juncture, the chief verderer, mounted on a powerful steed, and followed by two keepers, each holding a couple of stag-hounds in leash, rode up to the royal stand, and placing his horn to his lips, blew three long mootes from it. At the same moment, part of the network of the haye was lifted up, and a roebuck set free.

By the management of the keepers, the animal was driven past the royal stand; and Anne Boleyn, who had drawn an arrow nearly to the head, let it fly with such good aim, that she pierced the buck to the heart. A loud shout from the spectators rewarded the prowess of the fair huntress; and Henry was so enchanted, that he bent the knee to her, and pressed her hand to his lips. Satisfied, however, with the achievement, Anne prudently declined another shot. Henry then took a bow from one of the archers, and other roes being turned out, he approved upon them his unerring skill as a marksman.

Meanwhile, the hounds, being held in leash, kept up a loud and incessant baying; and Henry, wearying of his slaughterous sport, turned to Anne, and asked her whether she was disposed for the chase. She answered in the affirmative, and the king motioned his henchmen to bring forward the steeds.

In doing this, he caught sight of Mabel, who was stand-

ing with her grandsire among the keepers, at a little distance from the stand, and, struck with her extraordinary beauty, he regarded her for a moment intently, and then called to Gabriel Lapp, who chanced to be near him, and demanded her name.

"It is Mabel Lyndwood, an' please your majesty," replied Gabriel. "She is granddaughter to old Tristram Lyndwood, who dwells at Black Nest, near the lake, at the further extremity of Windsor Forest, and who was forester to your royal father, King Henry the Seventh of blessed memory."

"Ha! is it so?" cried Henry.

But he was prevented from further remark by Anne Boleyn, who perceiving how his attention was attracted, suddenly interposed.

"Your majesty spoke of the chase," she said, impatiently. "But perhaps you have found other pastime more diverting?"

"Not so,—not so, sweetheart," he replied, hastily.

"There is a hart royal in the haye," said Gabriel Lapp. "Is it your majesty's pleasure that I set him free?"

"It is, good fellow—it is," replied the king.

And as Gabriel hastened to the netted fencework, and prepared to drive forth the hart, Henry assisted Anne Boleyn, who could not help exhibiting some slight jealous pique, to mount her steed, and having sprung into his own saddle, they waited the liberation of the buck, which was accomplished in a somewhat unexpected manner.

Separated from the rest of the herd, the noble animal made a sudden dart towards Gabriel, and upsetting him in his wild career, darted past the king, and made towards the upper part of the forest. In another instant, the hounds were uncoupled, and at his heels, while Henry and Anne urged their steeds after him, the king shouting at the top of his lusty voice. The rest of the royal party

followed as they might, and the woods resounded with their joyous cries.

The hart royal proved himself worthy of his designation. Dashing forward with extraordinary swiftness, he rapidly gained upon his pursuers—for though Henry, by putting his courser to his utmost speed, could have kept near him, he did not choose to quit his fair companion.

In this way, they scoured the forest, until the king, seeing they should be speedily distanced, commanded Sir Thomas Wyat, who, with the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk, was riding close behind him, to cross by the lower ground on the left, and turn the stag. Wyat instantly obeyed, and plunging his spurs deeply into his horse's sides, started off at a furious pace, and was soon after seen shaping his rapid course through a devious glade.

Meanwhile, Henry and his fair companion rode on without relaxing their pace, until they reached the summit of a knoll, crowned by an old oak and beech-tree, and commanding a superb view of the castle, where they drew in the rein.

From this eminence, they could witness the progress of the chase, as it continued in the valley beyond. An ardent lover of hunting, the king watched it with the deepest interest, rose in his saddle, and uttering various exclamations, showed, from his impatience, that he was only restrained by the stronger passion of love from joining it.

Ere long, stag, hounds, and huntsmen, were lost amid a thicket, and nothing could be distinguished but a distant baying and shouts. At last, even these sounds died away.

Henry, who had ill brooked the previous restraint, now grew so impatient, that Anne begged him to set off after them, when, suddenly, the cry of hounds burst upon their ear, and the hart was seen issuing from the dell, closely followed by his pursuers.

The affrighted animal, to the king's great satisfaction, made his way directly towards the spot where he was stationed; but on reaching the side of the knoll, and seeing his new foes, he darted off on the right, and tried to regain the thicket below. But he was turned by another band of keepers, and again driven towards the knoll.

Scarcely had Sir Thomas Wyat reined in his steed by the side of the king, than the hart again appeared bounding up the hill. Anne Boleyn, who had turned her horse's head to obtain a better view of the hunt, alarmed by the animal's menacing appearance, tried to get out of his way. But it was too late. Hemmed in on all sides, and driven to desperation by the cries of hounds and huntsmen in front, the hart lowered his horns, and made a furious push at her.

Dreadfully alarmed, Anne drew in the rein so suddenly and sharply, that she almost pulled her steed back upon his haunches; and in trying to avoid the stag's attack, caught hold of Sir Thomas Wyat, who was close beside her.

In all probability, she would have received some serious injury from the infuriated animal, who was just about to repeat his assault, and more successfully, when a bolt from a crossbow, discharged by Morgan Fenwolf, who suddenly made his appearance from behind the beech-tree, brought him to the ground.

But Anne Boleyn escaped one danger only to encounter another equally serious. On seeing her fling herself into the arms of Sir Thomas Wyat, Henry regarded her in stern displeasure for a moment, and then calling angrily to his train, without so much as deigning to inquire whether she had sustained any damage from the accident, or making the slightest remark upon her conduct, rode sullenly towards the castle.

CHAPTER IX.

BY WHAT MEANS SIR THOMAS WYAT OBTAINED AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNE BOLEYN; AND HOW THE EARL OF SURREY SAVED THEM FROM THE KING'S ANGER.

The incident above related gave new life to the adherents of Catherine of Aragon, while it filled those devoted to Anne Boleyn with alarm. Immediately on Anne's return to the castle, Lord Rochford had a private interview with her, and bitterly reproached her for endangering her splendid prospects. Anne treated the matter very lightly; said it was only a temporary gust of jealousy; and added that the king would be at her feet again before the day was past.

"You are over-confident, mistress!" cried Rochford, angrily. "Henry is not an ordinary gallant."

"It is you who are mistaken, father," replied Anne. "The king differs in no respect from any of his love-smitten subjects. I have him in my toils, and will not let him escape."

"You have a tiger in your toils, daughter, and take heed he breaks not forcibly through them," rejoined Rochford. "Henry is more wayward than you suppose him. Once let him take up a notion, and nothing can shake him from it. He has resolved upon the divorce as much from self-will as from any other consideration. If you regain your position with him, of which you seem so confident, do not consider yourself secure—not even when you are crowned queen—but be warned by Catherine of Aragon."

"Catherine has not the art to retain him," said Anne. "Henry will never divorce *me*."

"Take care he does not rid himself of you in a more summary manner, daughter," rejoined Rochford. "If you would stand well with him, you must study his lightest word, look, and action,—humor him in every whim,—and yield to every caprice. Above all, you must exhibit no jealousy."

"You are wrong in all but the last, father," returned Anne. "Henry is not to be pleased by such nice attention to his humors. It is because I have shown myself careless of them that I have captivated him. But I will take care not to exhibit jealousy, and sooth to say, I do not think I shall have cause."

"Be not too sure of that," replied Rochford. "And, at all events, let not the king have cause to be jealous of you. I trust Wyat will be banished from the court. But if he is not, do not let him approach you more."

"Poor Sir Thomas!" sighed Anne. "He loved me very dearly."

"But what is his love compared to the king's?" cried Rochford. "Tut, tut, girl! think no more of him."

"I will not, my lord," she rejoined; "I see the prudence of your counsel, and will obey it. Leave me, I pray you. I will soon win back the affections of the king."

No sooner had Rochford quitted the chamber than the arras at the further end was raised, and Wyat stepped from behind it. His first proceeding was to bar the door.

"What means this, Sir Thomas?" cried Anne, in alarm. "How have you obtained admittance here?"

"Through the secret staircase," replied Wyat, bending the knee before her.

"Rise, sir!" cried Anne, in great alarm—"Return, I beseech you, as you came. You have greatly endangered me by coming here. If you are seen to leave this chamber,

it will be in vain to assert my innocence to Henry. Oh, Sir Thomas, you cannot love me, or you would not have done this!"

"Not love you, Anne!" he repeated, bitterly; "not love you! Words cannot speak my devotion. I would lay down my head on the scaffold to prove it. But for my love for you, I would throw open that door, and walk forth so that all might see me,—so that Henry might experience some part of the anguish I now feel."

"But you will not do so, good Sir Thomas—dear Sir Thomas," cried Anne Boleyn, in alarm.

"Have no fear," rejoined Wyat, with some contempt—"I will sacrifice even vengeance to love."

"Sir Thomas, I have tolerated this too long," said Anne, "begone. You terrify me."

"It is my last interview with you, Anne," said Wyat, imploringly,—"do not abridge it. Oh, bethink you of the happy hours we have passed together—of the vows we have interchanged—of the protestations you have listened to, and returned—ay, returned, Anne. Are all these forgotten?"

"Not forgotten, Sir Thomas," replied Anne, mournfully; "but they must not be recalled. I cannot listen to you longer. You must go. Heaven grant you may get hence in safety!"

"Anne," replied Wyat, in a somber tone, "the thought of Henry's happiness drives me mad. I feel that I am grown a traitor,—that I could slay him."

"Sir Thomas!" she exclaimed, in mingled fear and anger.

"I will *not* go," he continued, flinging himself into a seat. "Let them put what construction they will upon my presence. I shall at least wring Henry's heart. I shall see him suffer as I have suffered; and I shall be content."

"This is not like you, Wyat," cried Anne, in great

alarm. "You were wont to be noble, generous, kind. You will not act thus disloyally?"

"Who has acted disloyally, Anne," cried Wyat, springing to his feet, and fixing his dark eyes, blazing with jealous fury, upon her—"you or I? Have you not sacrificed your old affections at the shrine of ambition? Are you not about to give yourself to one, to whom—unless you are forsworn—you cannot give your heart? Better had you been the mistress of Allington Castle—better the wife of a humble knight like myself, than the queen of the ruthless Henry."

"No more of this, Wyat," said Anne.

"Better far you should perish by his tyranny for a supposed fault now than hereafter," pursued Wyat, fiercely. "Think not Henry will respect you more than her who has been eight and twenty years his wife. No, when he is tired of your charms—when some other dame, fair as yourself, shall enslave his fancy, he will cast you off, or, as your father truly intimated, will seek a readier means of ridding himself of you. Then you will think of the different fate that might have been yours if you had adhered to your early love."

"Wyat, Wyat! I cannot bear this,—in mercy spare me!" cried Anne.

"I am glad to see you weep," said Wyat; "your tears make you look more like your former self."

"Oh, Wyat, do not view my conduct too harshly!" she said. "Few of my sex would have acted other than I have done."

"I do not think so," replied Wyat, sternly; "nor will I forego my vengeance. Anne, you shall die. You know Henry too well to doubt your fate if he finds me here."

"You cannot mean this," she rejoined, with difficulty repressing a scream; "but if I perish, you will perish with me."

"I wish to do so," he rejoined, with a bitter laugh.

"Wyat," cried Anne, throwing herself on her knees before him, "by your former love for me, I implore you to spare me! Do not disgrace me thus."

But Wyat continued inexorable.

"Oh God!" exclaimed Anne, wringing her hands in agony.

A terrible silence ensued, during which Anne regarded Wyat, but she could discern no change in his countenance.

At this juncture, the tapestry was again raised, and the Earl of Surrey issued from it.

"You here, my lord?" said Anne, rushing towards him.

"I am come to save you, madam," said the earl; "I have been just liberated from arrest, and was about to implore your intercession with the king, when I learned he had been informed by one of his pages, that a man was in your chamber. Luckily, he knows not who it is, and while he was summoning his attendants to accompany him, I hurried hither by the secret staircase. I have arrived in time. Fly—fly! Sir Thomas Wyat!"

But Wyat moved not.

At this moment, footsteps were heard approaching the door—the handle was tried—and the stern voice of the king was heard commanding that it might be opened.

"Will you destroy me, Wyat?" cried Anne.

"You have destroyed yourself," he rejoined.

"Why stay you here, Sir Thomas?" said Surrey, seizing his arm. "You may yet escape. By heaven! if you move not, I will stab you to the heart!"

"You would do me a favor, young man," said Wyat, coldly; "but I will go. I yield to love, and not to you, tyrant!" he added, shaking his hand at the door. "May the worst pangs of jealousy rend your heart!" And he disappeared behind the arras.

"I hear voices," cried Henry from without. "God's death! madam, open the door—or I will burst it open!"

"Oh heaven! what is to be done!" cried Anne Boleyn, in despair.

"Open the door, and leave all to me, madam," said Surrey; "I will save you, though it cost me my life!"

Anne pressed his hand, with a look of ineffable gratitude, and Surrey concealed himself behind the arras.

The door was opened, and Henry rushed in, followed by Richmond, Norfolk, Suffolk, and a host of attendants.

"Ah! God's death! where is the traitor?" roared the king, gazing round.

"Why is my privacy thus broken upon?" said Anne, assuming a look of indignation.

"Your privacy!" echoed Henry, in a tone of deep derision—"your privacy!—ha! ha! You bear yourself bravely, it must be confessed. My lords, you heard the voices as well as myself. Where is Sir Thomas Wyat?"

"He is not here," replied Anne, firmly.

"Aha! we shall see that, mistress," rejoined Henry, fiercely. "But if Sir Thomas Wyat is not here—who is? for I am well assured that some one is hidden in your chamber."

"What if there be?" rejoined Anne, coldly.

"Ah! by Saint Mary, you confess it!" cried the king. "Let the traitor come forth."

"Your majesty shall not need to bid twice," said Surrey, issuing from his concealment.

"The Earl of Surrey!" exclaimed Henry, in surprise. "How come you here, my lord? Methought you were under arrest at the guard-house."

"He was set free by my orders," said the Duke of Richmond.

"First of all, I must entreat your majesty to turn your

resentment against me," said the Earl. "I am solely to blame, and I would not have the Lady Anne suffer for my fault. I forced myself into her presence. She knew not of my coming."

"And wherefore did you so, my lord?" demanded Henry, sternly.

"Liberated from the guard-house, at the Duke of Richmond's instance, my liege, I came to entreat the Lady Anne to mediate between me and your majesty, and to use her influence with your highness to have me betrothed to the Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald."

"Is this so, madam?" asked the king.

Anne bowed her head.

"But why was the door barred?" demanded Henry, again frowning suspiciously.

"I barred it myself," said Surrey, "and vowed that the Lady Anne should not go forth till she had granted my request."

"By our Lady! you have placed yourself in peril, my lord," said Henry, sternly.

"Your majesty will bear in mind his youth," said the Duke of Norfolk, anxiously.

"For my sake overlook the indiscretion," cried the Duke of Richmond.

"It will not, perhaps, avail him to hope that it may be overlooked for mine," added Anne Boleyn.

"The offense must not pass unpunished," said Henry, musingly. "My lord of Surrey, you must be content to remain for two months a prisoner in the Round Tower of this castle."

"Your majesty!" cried Richmond, bending the knee in supplication.

"The sentence is passed," replied Henry, coldly; "and the earl may thank you it is not heavier. Richmond, you will think no more of the fair Geraldine; and it is my

pleasure, Lady Anne, that the young dame withdraw from the court for a short while."

"Your majesty shall be obeyed," said Anne; "but——"

"But me no buts, sweetheart," said the king, peremptorily. "Surrey's explanation is satisfactory so far as it goes, but I was told Sir Thomas Wyat was here."

"Sir Thomas Wyat *is* here," said Will Sommers, pointing out the knight, who had just joined the throng of courtiers at the door.

"I have hurried hither from my chamber, my liege," said Wyat, stepping forward, "hearing there was some inquiry concerning me."

"Is your majesty now satisfied?" asked Anne Boleyn.

"Why, ay, sweetheart, well enough," rejoined Henry. "Sir Thomas Wyat, we have a special mission for you to the court of our brother of France. You will set out tomorrow."

Wyat bowed.

"You have saved your head, gossip," whispered Will Sommers in the knight's ear. "A visit to Francis the First is better than a visit to the Tower."

"Retire, my lords," said Henry, to the assemblage; "we owe some apology to the Lady Anne for our intrusion, and desire an opportunity to make it."

Upon this, the chamber was instantly cleared of its occupants, and the Earl of Surrey was conducted under a guard to the Round Tower.

Henry, however, did not find it an easy matter to make peace with the Lady Anne. Conscious of the advantage she had gained, she determined not to relinquish it, and after half an hour's vain suing, her royal lover proposed a turn in the long gallery, upon which her apartments opened. Here they continued conversing—Henry pleading in the most passionate manner, and Anne maintaining a show of offended pride.

At last, she exhibited some signs of relenting, and Henry led her into a recess in the gallery, lighted by a window filled with magnificent stained glass. In this recess was a seat and a small table, on which stood a vase filled with flowers, arranged by Anne's own hand; and here the monarch hoped to adjust his differences with her.

Meanwhile, word having reached Wolsey and Campeggio of the new cause of jealousy which the king had received, it was instantly resolved that the former should present to him, while in his present favorable mood, a despatch received that morning from Catherine of Aragon.

Armed with the letter, Wolsey repaired to the king's closet. Not finding him there, and being given to understand by an usher that he was in the great gallery, he proceeded thither. As he walked softly along the polished oak floor, he heard voices in one of the recesses, and distinguished the tones of Henry and Anne Boleyn.

Henry was clasping the snowy fingers of his favorite, and gazing passionately at her, as the cardinal approached.

"Your majesty shall not detain my hand," said Anne, "unless you swear to me, by your crown, that you will not again be jealous without cause."

"I swear it!" replied Henry.

"Were your majesty as devoted to me as you would have me believe, you would soon bring this matter of the divorce to an issue," said Anne.

"I would fain do so, sweetheart," rejoined Henry; "but these cardinals perplex me sorely."

"I am told by one who overheard him, that Wolsey has declared the divorce shall not be settled these two years," said Anne; "in which case it had better not be settled at all; for I care not to avow I cannot brook so much delay. The warmth of my affection will grow icy cold by that time."

"It were enough to try the patience of the most forbearing," rejoined the king, smiling—"but it shall not be so—by this lily hand it shall not! And now, sweetheart, are we entirely reconciled?"

"Not yet," replied Anne. "I shall claim a boon from your majesty before I accord my entire forgiveness."

"Name it," said the king, still clasping her hand tenderly, and intoxicated by the witchery of her glance.

"I ask an important favor," said Anne—"but as it is one which will benefit your majesty as much as myself, I have the less scruple in requesting it. I ask the dismissal of one who has abused your favor—who, by his extortion and rapacity, has in some degree alienated the affections of your subjects from you—and who solely opposes your divorce from Catherine of Aragon because he fears my influence may be prejudicial to him."

"You cannot mean Wolsey?" said Henry, uneasily.

"Your majesty has guessed aright," replied Anne.

"Wolsey has incurred my displeasure oft of late," said Henry, "and yet his fidelity——"

"Be not deceived, my liege," said Anne; "he is faithful to you only so far as serves his turn. He thinks he rules you."

Before Henry could reply, the cardinal stepped forward.

"I bring your majesty a despatch, just received from the queen," he said.

"And you have been listening to our discourse?" rejoined Henry, sternly. "You have overheard——"

"Enough to convince me, if I had previously doubted it, that the Lady Anne Boleyn is my mortal foe," replied Wolsey.

"Foe though I am, I will make terms with your eminence," said Anne. "Expedite the divorce—you can do so if you will,—and I am your fast friend."

"I know too well the value of your friendship, noble

lady, not to do all in my power to gain it," replied Wolsey. "I will further the matter, if possible. But it rests chiefly in the hands of his holiness, Pope Clement the Seventh."

"If his majesty will listen to my counsel, he will throw off the pope's yoke altogether," rejoined Anne. "Nay, your eminence may frown at me if you will. Such, I repeat, shall be my counsel. If the divorce is speedily obtained, I am your friend: if not—look to yourself."

"Do not appeal to me, Wolsey," said Henry, smiling approval at Anne—"I shall uphold her."

"Will it please your majesty to peruse this despatch?" said Wolsey, again offering Catherine's letter.

"Take it to my closet," replied the king; "I will join you there. And now at last we are good friends, sweetheart."

"Excellent friends, my dear liege," replied Anne; "but I shall never be your queen while Wolsey holds his place."

"Then, indeed, he shall lose it," replied Henry.

"She is a bitter enemy, certes," muttered Wolsey, as he walked away. "I must overthrow her quickly, or she will overthrow me. A rival must be found—ay, a rival—but where? I was told that Henry cast eyes on a comely forester's daughter at the chase this morning. She may do for the nonce."

CHAPTER X.

OF THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF HERNE THE HUNTER IN THE LAKE.

Unable to procure any mitigation of Surrey's sentence, the Duke of Richmond proceeded to the Round Tower, where he found his friend in a small chamber, endeavoring to beguile his captivity by study.

Richmond endeavored to console him, and was glad to find him in better spirits than he expected. Early youth is seldom long dejected; and misfortunes, at that buoyant season, seem lighter than they appear later on in life. The cause for which he suffered, moreover, sustained Surrey, and confident of the fair Geraldine's attachment, he cared little for the restraint imposed upon him. On one point he expressed some regret,—namely, his inability to prosecute the adventure of Herne the hunter with the duke.

"I grieve that I cannot accompany you, Richmond," he said; "but since that is impossible, let me recommend you to take the stout archer who goes by the name of the Duke of Shoreditch with you. He is the very man you require."

After some consideration, the duke assented, and, promising to return on the following day and report what had occurred, he took his leave, and went in search of the archer in question. Finding he had taken up his quarters at the Garter, he sent for him, and proposed the matter.

Shoreditch heard the duke's relation with astonishment, but expressed the greatest willingness to accom-

pany him, pledging himself, as Richmond demanded, to profound secrecy on the subject.

At the appointed hour—namely, midnight—the duke quitted the castle, and found Shoreditch waiting for him near the upper gate. The latter was armed with a stout staff, and a bow and arrows.

"If we gain sight of the mysterious horseman to-night," he said, "a cloth-yard shaft shall try whether he is of mortal mold or not. If he be not a demon, I will warrant he rides no more."

Quitting the Home Park, they shaped their course at once towards the forest. It was a stormy night, and the moon was obscured by thick clouds. Before they reached the hill, at the head of the long avenue, a heavy thunderstorm came on, and the lightning, playing among the trees, seemed to reveal a thousand fantastic forms to their half-blinded gaze. Presently the rain began to descend in torrents, and compelled them to take refuge beneath a large beech-tree.

It was evident, notwithstanding his boasting, that the courage of Shoreditch was waning fast, and he at last proposed to his leader that they should return as soon as the rain abated. But the duke indignantly rejected the proposal.

While they were thus sheltering themselves, the low winding of a horn was heard. The sound was succeeded by the trampling of horses' hoofs, and the next moment a vivid flash of lightning showed a hart darting past, followed by a troop of some twenty ghostly horsemen, headed by the demon hunter.

The Duke of Richmond bade his companion send a shaft after them; but the latter was so overcome by terror, that he could scarcely fix an arrow on the string, and when he bent the bow the shaft glanced from the branches of an adjoining tree.

The storm continued with unabated fury for nearly an hour, at the expiration of which time it partially cleared off, and though it was still profoundly dark, the duke insisted upon going on. So they pressed forward beneath the dripping trees, and through the wet grass. Ever and anon, the moon broke through the rifted clouds, and shed a wild glimmer upon the scene.

As they were tracking a glade on the further side of the hill, the spectral huntsmen again swept past them, and so closely, that they could almost touch their horses. To the duke's horror he perceived among them the body of the butcher, Mark Fytton, sitting erect upon a powerful black steed.

By this time, Shoreditch, having somewhat regained his courage, discharged another shaft at the troop. The arrow struck the body of the butcher, and completely transfixed it, but did not check his career; while wild and derisive laughter broke from the rest of the cavalcade.

The Duke of Richmond hurried after the band, trying to keep them in sight; and Shoreditch, flinging down his bow, which he found useless, and grasping his staff, endeavored to keep up with him. But though they ran swiftly down the glade, and tried to peer through the darkness, they could see nothing more of the ghostly company.

After a while, they arrived at a hillside, at the foot of which lay the lake, whose darkling waters were just distinguishable through an opening in the trees. As the duke was debating with himself whether to go on, or retrace his course, the trampling of a horse was heard behind them, and looking in the direction of the sound, they beheld Herne the hunter, mounted on his swarthy steed, and accompanied only by his two black hounds, galloping furiously down the declivity. Before him flew the owl, whooping as it sailed along the air.

As the wild huntsman reached the brink of the lake, he placed a horn to his mouth, and blew from it a bright blue flame. Page 101.

—*Windsor Castle.*

The demon hunter was so close to them, that they could perfectly discern his horrible lineaments, the chain depending from his neck, and his antlered helm. Richmond shouted to him, but the rider continued his headlong course towards the lake, heedless of the call.

The two beholders rushed forward, but by this time the huntsman had gained the edge of the lake. One of his sable hounds plunged into it, and the owl skimmed over its surface. Even in the hasty view which the duke caught of the flying figure, he fancied he perceived that it was attended by a fantastic shadow, whether cast by itself, or arising from some supernatural cause, he could not determine.

But what followed was equally marvelous and incomprehensible. As the wild huntsman reached the brink of the lake, he placed a horn to his mouth, and blew from it a bright blue flame, which illumined his own dusky and hideous features, and shed a wild and unearthly glimmer over the surrounding objects.

While enveloped in this flame, the demon plunged into the lake, and apparently descended to its abysses, for as soon as the duke could muster courage to approach its brink, nothing could be seen of him, his steed, or his hounds.

Thus ends the First Book of the Chronicle of Windsor Castle.

Book the Second.

HERNE THE HUNTER.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE COMPACT BETWEEN SIR THOMAS WYAT AND HERNE THE HUNTER.

On the day after his secret interview with Anne Boleyn, Sir Thomas Wyat received despatches from the king for the court of France. "His majesty bade me tell you to make your preparations quickly, Sir Thomas," said the messenger who delivered the despatches. "He cares not how soon you set forth."

"The king's pleasure shall be obeyed," rejoined Wyat.

And the messenger retired.

Left alone, Wyat remained for some time in profound and melancholy thought. Heaving a deep sigh, he then arose, and paced the chamber with rapid strides.

"Yes, it is better thus," he ejaculated; "if I remain near her, I shall do some desperate deed. Better—far better—I should go. And yet to leave her with Henry—to know that he is ever near her—that he drinks in the music of her voice, and basks in the sunshine of her smile—while I am driven forth to darkness and despair—the thought is madness! I will not obey the hateful mandate! I will stay and defy him!"

As he uttered aloud this wild and unguarded speech, the arras screening the door was drawn aside, and gave admittance to Wolsey.

Wyat's gaze sunk before the penetrating glance fixed upon him by the cardinal.

"I did not come to play the eavesdropper, Sir Thomas," said Wolsey; "but I have heard enough to place your life in my power. So, you refuse to obey the king's injunctions. You refuse to proceed to Paris. You

refuse to assist in bringing about the divorce, and prefer remaining here to brave your sovereign, and avenge yourself upon a fickle mistress. Ha?"

Wyat returned no answer.

"If such be your purpose," pursued Wolsey, after a pause, during which he intently scrutinized the knight's countenance, "I will assist you in it. Be ruled by me, and you shall have a deep and full revenge."

"Say on," rejoined Wyat;—his eyes blazing with infernal fire, and his hand involuntarily clutching the handle of his dagger.

"If I read you aright," continued the cardinal, "you are arrived at that pitch of desperation, when life itself becomes indifferent, and when but one object remains to be gained——"

"And that is vengeance!" interrupted Wyat, fiercely. "Right, cardinal—right. I will have vengeance—terrible vengeance!"

"You shall. But I will not deceive you. You will purchase what you seek at the price of your own head."

"I care not," replied Wyat. "All sentiments of love and loyalty are swallowed up by jealousy and burning hate. Nothing but blood can allay the fever that consumes me. Show me how to slay him!"

"*Him!*" echoed the cardinal, in alarm and horror. "Wretch! would you kill your king? God forbid that I should counsel the injury of a hair of his head! I do not want you to play the assassin, Wyat," he added, more calmly, "but the just avenger. Liberate the king from the thraldom of the capricious syren who enslaves him, and you will do a service to the whole country. A word from you—a letter—a token—will cast her from the king, and place her on the block. And what matter? The gory scaffold were better than Henry's bed."

"I cannot harm her," cried Wyat, distractedly. "I

love her still, devotedly as ever. She was in my power yesterday, and without your aid, cardinal, I could have wreaked my vengeance upon her, if I had been so minded."

"You *were* then in her chamber, as the king suspected?" cried Wolsey, with a look of exultation. "Trouble yourself no more, Sir Thomas. I will take the part of vengeance off your hands."

"My indiscretion will avail you little, cardinal," replied Wyat, sternly. "A hasty word proves nothing. I will perish on the rack sooner than accuse Anne Boleyn. I am a desperate man, but not so desperate as you suppose me. A moment ago, I might have been led on, by the murderous and traitorous impulse that prompted me to lift my hand against the king, but I never could have injured her."

"You are a madman!" cried Wolsey, impatiently; "and it is a waste of time to argue with you. I wish you good speed on your journey. On your return, you will find Anne Boleyn Queen of England."

"And you disgraced," rejoined Wyat, as, with a malignant and vindictive look, the cardinal quitted the chamber.

Again left alone, Wyat fell into another fit of despondency, from which he roused himself with difficulty, and went forth to visit the Earl of Surrey in the Round Tower.

Some delay occurred before he could obtain access to the earl. The halberdier stationed at the entrance to the keep near the Norman Tower, refused to admit him without the order of the officer in command of the Tower, and as the latter was not in the way at the moment, Wyat had to remain without, till he made his appearance.

While thus detained, he beheld Anne Boleyn and her royal lover mount their steeds, in the upper ward, and ride forth, with their attendants, on a hawking expedi-

tion. Anne Boleyn bore a beautiful falcon on her wrist—Wyat's own gift to her in happier days—and looked full of coquetry, animation, and delight—without the vestige of a cloud upon her brow, or a care on her countenance. With increased bitterness of heart, he turned from the sight, and shrouded himself beneath the gateway of the Norman Tower.

Soon after this, the officer appeared, and at once according Wyat permission to see the earl, preceded him up the long flight of stone steps communicating with the upper part of the keep, and screened by an embattled and turreted structure, constituting a covered way to the Round Tower.

Arrived at the landing, the officer unlocked a door on the left, and ushered his companion into the prisoner's chamber.

Influenced by the circular shape of the structure in which it was situated, and of which it formed a segment, the further part of this chamber was almost lost to view, and a number of cross-beams and wooden pillars added to its somber and mysterious appearance. The walls were of enormous thickness, and a narrow loophole, terminating a deep embrasure, afforded but scanty light. Opposite the embrasure sat Surrey, at a small table covered with books and writing materials. A lute lay beside him on the floor, and there were several astrological and alchemical implements within reach.

So immersed was the youthful prisoner in study, that he was not aware, until a slight exclamation was uttered by Wyat, of the entrance of the latter. He then arose, and gave him welcome.

Nothing material passed between them as long as the officer remained in the chamber, but on his departure, Surrey observed, laughingly, to his friend—"And how doth my fair cousin, the Lady Anne Boleyn?"

"She has just ridden forth with the king, to hawk in the park," replied Wyat, moodily. "For myself, I am ordered on a mission to France, but I could not depart without entreating your forgiveness for the jeopardy in which I have placed you. Would I could take your place."

"Do not heed me," replied Surrey—"I am well content with what has happened. Virgil and Homer, Dante and Petrarch, are the companions of my confinement: and in good sooth, I am glad to be alone. Amid the distractions of the court, I could find little leisure for the Muse."

"Your situation is, in many respects, enviable, Surrey," replied Wyat. "Disturbed by no jealous doubts and fears, you can beguile the tedious hours in the cultivation of your poetical tastes, or in study. Still, I must needs reproach myself with being the cause of your imprisonment."

"I repeat you have done me a service," rejoined the earl. "I would lay down my life for my fair cousin, Anne Boleyn, and I am glad to be able to prove the sincerity of my regard for you, Wyat. I applaud the king's judgment in sending you to France, and if you will be counseled by me, you will stay there long enough to forget her who now occasions you so much uneasiness."

"Will the fair Geraldine be forgotten when the term of your imprisonment shall expire, my lord?" asked Wyat.

"Of a surety, not," replied the earl.

"And yet, in less than two months, I shall return from France," rejoined Wyat.

"Our cases are not alike," said Surrey. "The Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald has plighted her troth to me."

"Anne Boleyn vowed eternal constancy to me," cried Wyat, bitterly: "and you see how she has kept her oath! The absent are always in danger; and few women are proof against ambition. Vanity—vanity is the rock they

split upon. May you never experience from Richmond the wrong I have experienced from his father."

"I have no fear," replied Surrey.

As he spoke, there was a slight noise in that part of the chamber which was buried in darkness.

"Have we a listener here?" cried Wyat, grasping his sword.

"Not unless it be a four-legged one from the dungeons beneath," replied Surrey. "But you were speaking of Richmond. He visited me this morning, and came to relate the particulars of a mysterious adventure that occurred to him last night."

And the earl proceeded to detail what had befallen the duke in the forest.

"A marvelous story, truly!" said Wyat, pondering upon the relation. "I will seek out the demon huntsman myself."

Again, a noise similar to that heard a moment before, resounded from the lower part of the room. Wyat immediately flew thither, and drawing his sword, searched about with its point, but ineffectually.

"It could not be fancy," he said; "and yet nothing is to be found."

"I do not like jesting about Herne the hunter," remarked Surrey, "after what I myself have seen. In your present frame of mind, I advise you not to hazard an interview with the fiend. He has power over the desperate."

Wyat returned no answer. He seemed lost in gloomy thought, and soon afterwards took his leave.

On returning to his lodgings, he summoned his attendants, and ordered them to proceed to Kingston; adding that he would join them there early next morning. One of them, an old serving man, noticing the exceeding haggardness of his looks, endeavored to persuade him to go

with them; but Wyat, with a harshness totally unlike his customary manner, which was gracious and kindly, in the extreme, peremptorily refused.

"You look very ill, Sir Thomas," said the old servant; "worse than I ever remember seeing you. Listen to my counsel, I beseech you. Plead ill health with the king in excuse of your mission to France, and retire, for some months, to recruit your strength and spirits at Allington."

"Tush! Adam Twisden—I am well enough," exclaimed Wyat, impatiently. "Go and prepare my mails."

"My dear, dear master," cried old Adam, bending the knee before him, and pressing his hands to his lips; "something tells me that if I leave you now, I shall never see you again. There is a paleness in your cheek, and a fire in your eye, such as I never before observed in you or in mortal man. I tremble to say it, but you look like one possessed by the fiend. Forgive my boldness, sir. I speak from affection and duty. I was serving-man to your father, good Sir Henry Wyat, before you, and I love you as a son, while I honor you as a master. I have heard that there are evil beings in the forest—nay, even within the castle—who lure men to perdition by promising to accomplish their wicked desires. I trust no such being has crossed your path."

"Make yourself easy, good Adam," replied Wyat; "no fiend has tempted me."

"Swear it, sir," cried the old man, eagerly,—"swear it by the Holy Trinity!"

"By the Holy Trinity, I swear it!" replied Wyat.

As the words were uttered, the door behind the arras was suddenly shut with violence.

"Curses on you, villain! you have left the door open!" cried Wyat, fiercely. "Our conversation has been overheard."

"I will soon see by whom," cried Adam, springing to

his feet, and rushing towards the door, which opened upon a long corridor.

"Well!" cried Wyat, as Adam returned the next moment with cheeks almost as white as his own—"was it the cardinal?"

"It was the devil, I believe!" replied the old man. "I could see no one."

"It would not require supernatural power to retreat into an adjoining chamber, fool!" replied Wyat, affecting an incredulity he was far from feeling.

"Your worship's adjuration was strangely interrupted," cried the old man, crossing himself devoutly. "Saint Dunstan and Saint Christopher shield us from evil spirits!"

"A truce to your idle terrors, Adam," said Wyat. "Take these packets," he added, giving him Henry's despatches, "and guard them as you would your life. I am going on an expedition of some peril to-night, and do not choose to keep them about me. Bid the grooms have my steed in readiness an hour before midnight."

"I hope your worship is not about to ride into the forest at that hour?" said Adam, trembling. "I was told by the stout archer, whom the king dubbed Duke of Shoreditch, that he and the Duke of Richmond ventured thither last night; and that they saw a legion of demons mounted on coal-black horses, and amongst them Mark Fytton, the butcher, who was hanged a few days ago from the Curfew Tower by the king's orders, and whose body so strangely disappeared. Do not go into the forest, dear Sir Thomas!"

"No more of this!" cried Wyat, fiercely. "Do as I bid you, and if I join you not before noon to-morrow, proceed to Rochester, and there await my coming."

"I never expect to see you again, sir!" groaned the old man, as he took his leave.

The anxious concern evinced in his behalf by his old and trusty servant, was not without effect on Sir Thomas Wyat, and made him hesitate in his design; but, by and by, another access of jealous rage came on, and overwhelmed all his better resolutions. He remained within his chamber to a late hour, and then issuing forth, proceeded to the terrace at the north of the castle, where he was challenged by a sentinel, but was suffered to pass on, on giving the watchword.

The night was profoundly dark, and the whole of the glorious prospect commanded by the terrace shrouded from view. But Wyat's object in coming thither was to gaze, for the last time, at that part of the castle which inclosed Anne Boleyn, and knowing well the situation of her apartments, he fixed his eyes upon the windows; but though numerous lights streamed from the adjoining corridor, all here was buried in obscurity.

Suddenly, however, the chamber was illumined, and he beheld Henry and Anne Boleyn enter it, preceded by a band of attendants bearing tapers. It needed not Wyat's jealousy-sharpened gaze to read, even at that distance, the king's enamored looks, or Anne Boleyn's responsive glances. He saw that one of Henry's arms encircled her waist, while the other caressed her yielding hand. They paused. Henry bent forward, and Anne half averted her head, but not so much so as to prevent the king from imprinting a long and fervid kiss upon her lips.

Terrible was its effect upon Wyat. An adder's bite would have been less painful. His hands convulsively clutched together; his hair stood erect upon his head; a shiver ran through his frame; and he tottered back several paces. When he recovered, Henry had bidden good night to the object of his love, and having nearly gained the door, turned and waved a tender valediction to her. As soon as he was gone, Anne looked round with a smile

of ineffable pride and pleasure at her attendants, but a cloud of curtains dropping over the window, shrouded her from the sight of her wretched lover.

In a state of agitation wholly indescribable, Wyat staggered towards the edge of the terrace,—it might be with the design of flinging himself from it,—but when within a few yards of the low parapet wall, defending its precipitous side, he perceived a tall dark figure standing directly in his path, and halted. Whether the object he beheld was human or not he could not determine, but it seemed of more than mortal stature. It was wrapped in a long black cloak, and wore a high conical cap on its head. Before Wyat could speak, the figure addressed him.

"You desire to see Herne the hunter," said the figure, in a deep, sepulchral tone. "Ride hence to the haunted beech-tree near the marsh, at the further side of the forest, and you will find him."

"You are Herne,—I feel it," cried Wyat. "Why go into the forest? Speak now."

And he stepped forward, with the intention of grasping the figure. But it eluded him, and, with a mocking laugh, melted into the darkness.

Wyat advanced to the edge of the terrace, and looked over the parapet, but he could see nothing except the tops of the tall trees springing from the side of the moat. Flying to the sentinel, he inquired whether any one had passed him, but the man returned an angry denial.

Awe-stricken and agitated, Wyat quitted the terrace, and seeking his steed, mounted him, and galloped into the forest.

"If he I have seen be not indeed the fiend, he will scarcely outstrip me in the race," he cried, as his steed bore him at a furious pace up the long avenue.

The gloom was here profound, being increased by the

dense masses of foliage beneath which he was riding. By the time, however, that he reached the summit of Snow Hill, the moon struggled through the clouds, and threw a wan glimmer over the leafy wilderness around. The deep slumber of the woods was unbroken by any sound save that of the frenzied rider bursting through them.

Well acquainted with the forest, Wyat held on a direct course. His brain was on fire, and the fury of his career increased his fearful excitement. Heedless of all impediments, he pressed forward—now dashing beneath overhanging boughs at the risk of his neck—now skirting the edge of a glen where a false step might have proved fatal.

On—on he went, his frenzy increasing each moment.

At length, he reached the woody height overlooking the marshy tract that formed the limit of his ride. Once more, the moon had withdrawn her luster, and a huge indistinct black mass alone pointed out the position of the haunted tree. Around it wheeled a large white owl, distinguishable by its ghostly plumage through the gloom, like a sea-bird in a storm; and hooting bodingly as it winged its mystic flight. No other sound was heard, nor living object seen.

While gazing into the dreary expanse beneath him, Wyat, for the first time since starting, experienced a sensation of doubt and dread; and the warning of his old and faithful attendant rushed upon his mind. He tried to recite a prayer, but the words died away on his lips,—neither would his fingers fashion the symbol of the cross.

But even these admonitions did not restrain him. Springing from his foaming and panting steed, and taking the bridle in his hand, he descended the side of the acclivity. Ever and anon, a rustling among the grass told him that a snake, with which description of reptile

the spot abounded, was gliding away from him. His horse, which had hitherto been all fire and impetuosity, now began to manifest symptoms of alarm, quivered in every limb, snorted, and required to be dragged along forcibly.

When within a few paces of the tree, its enormous rifted trunk became fully revealed to him. But no one was beside it. Wyat then stood still, and cried, in a loud, commanding tone—"Spirit, I summon thee!—appear!"

At these words, a sound like a peal of thunder rolled overhead, accompanied by screeches of discordant laughter. Other strange and unearthly noises were heard, and amidst the din, a blue, phosphoric light issued from the yawning crevice in the tree, while a tall, gaunt figure, crested with an antlered helm, sprang from it. At the same moment, a swarm of horribly-grotesque, swart objects, looking like imps, appeared amid the branches of the tree, and grinned and gesticulated at Wyat, whose courage remained unshaken during the fearful ordeal. Not so his steed. After rearing and plunging violently, the affrighted animal broke its hold, and darted off into the swamp, where it floundered, and was lost.

"You have called me, Sir Thomas Wyat," said the demon, in a sepulchral tone; "I am here. What would you?"

"My name being known to you, spirit of darkness, my errand should be also," replied Wyat, boldly.

"Your errand *is* known to me," replied the demon. "You have lost a mistress, and would regain her?"

"I would give my soul to win her back from my kingly rival," cried Wyat.

"I accept your offer," rejoined the spirit. "Anne Boleyn shall be yours. Your hand upon the compact."

Wyat stretched forth his hand, and grasped that of the demon. His fingers were compressed as if by a vice, and

he felt himself dragged towards the tree, while a stifling and sulphureous vapor rose around him. A black veil fell over his head, and was rapidly twined around his brow, in thick folds.

Amid yells of fiendish laughter, he was then lifted from the ground, thrust into the hollow of the tree, and thence, as it seemed to him, conveyed into a deep subterranean cave.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHAT MANNER WOLSEY PUT HIS SCHEME IN OPERATION

Foiled in his scheme of making Wyat the instrument of Anne Boleyn's overthrow, Wolsey determined to put into immediate operation the plan he had conceived of bringing forward a rival to her with the king. If a choice had been allowed him, he would have selected some high-born dame for the purpose; but as this was out of the question—and as, indeed, Henry had of late proved insensible to the attractions of all the beauties that crowded his court except Anne Boleyn—he trusted to the forester's fair granddaughter to accomplish his object.

The source whence he had received intelligence of the king's admiration of Mabel Lyndwood, was his jester, Patch,—a shrewd varlet who, under the mask of folly, picked up many an important secret for his master, and was proportionately rewarded.

Before executing the scheme, it was necessary to ascertain whether the damsel's beauty was as extraordinary as it had been represented; and with this view, Wolsey mounted his mule one morning, and, accompanied by Patch and another attendant, rode towards the forest.

It was a bright and beautiful morning, and preoccupied as he was, the plotting cardinal could not be wholly insensible to the loveliness of the scene around him. Crossing Spring Hill, he paused at the head of a long glade, skirted on the right by noble beech-trees, whose silver stems sparkled in the sunshine, and extending down to the thicket, now called, Cooke's Hill Wood. From this point, as from every other eminence on the northern side

of the forest, a magnificent view of the castle was obtained.

The sight of the kingly pile, towering above its vassal woods, kindled high and ambitious thoughts in his breast.

"The lord of that proud structure has been for years swayed by me," he mused, "and shall the royal puppet be at last wrested from me by a woman's hand? Not if I can hold my own."

Roused by the reflection, he quickened his pace, and shaping his course towards Black Nest, reached, in a short time, the borders of a wide swamp lying between the great lake and another pool of water of less extent, situated in the heart of the forest. This wild and dreary marsh, the haunt of the bittern and the plover, contrasted forcibly and disagreeably with the rich sylvan district he had just quitted.

"I should not like to cross this swamp at night," he observed to Patch, who rode close behind him.

"Nor I, your grace," replied the buffoon. "We might chance to be led by a will-o'-the-wisp to a watery grave."

"Such treacherous fires are not confined to these regions, knave," rejoined Wolsey. "Mankind are often lured, by delusive gleams of glory and power, into quagmires and deep pitfalls. Holy Virgin! what have we here?"

The exclamation was occasioned by a figure that suddenly emerged from the ground, at a little distance on the right. Wolsey's mule swerved so much as almost to endanger his seat, and he called out, in a loud angry tone, to the author of the annoyance, "Who are you, knave?—and what do you here?"

"I am a keeper of the forest, an' please your grace," replied the other, doffing his cap, and disclosing harsh features, which by no means recommended him to the cardinal, "and am named Morgan Fenwolf. I was couch-

ing among the reeds to get a shot at a fat buck, when your approach called me to my feet."

"By Saint Jude, this is the very fellow, your grace, who shot the hart-royal, the other day," cried Patch.

"And so preserved the Lady Anne Boleyn," rejoined the cardinal. "Art sure of it, knave?"

"As sure as your grace is of canonization," replied Patch.

"That shot should have brought you a rich reward, friend—either from the king's highness, or the Lady Anne?" remarked Wolsey to the keeper.

"It has brought me nothing," rejoined Fenwolf, sullenly.

"Hum!" exclaimed the cardinal. "Give the fellow a piece of gold, Patch."

"Methinks, I should have better earned your grace's bounty if I had let the hart work his will," said Fenwolf, reluctantly receiving the coin.

"How, fellow!" cried the cardinal, knitting his brows.

"Nay, I mean no offense," replied Fenwolf; "but the rumor goes that your grace and the Lady Anne are not well affected towards each other."

"The rumor is false," rejoined the cardinal—"and you can now contradict it on your own experience. Harkee, sirrah—where lies Tristram Lyndwood's hut?"

Fenwolf looked somewhat surprised and confused by the question.

"It lies on the other side of yonder rising ground, about half a mile hence," he said. "But if your grace is seeking old Tristram, you will not find him. I parted with him, half an hour ago, on Hawk's hill, and he was then on his way to the deer-pen at Bray Wood."

"If I see his granddaughter, Mabel, it will suffice," rejoined the cardinal. "I am told she is a comely damsel. Is it so?"

"I am but an indifferent judge of beauty," replied Fenwolf, moodily.

"Lead my mule across this swamp, thou senseless loon," said the cardinal, "and I will give thee my blessing."

With a very ill grace, Fenwolf complied, and conducted Wolsey to the further side of the marsh.

"If your grace pursues the path over the hill," he said, "and then strikes into the first opening on the right, it will bring you to the place you seek."

And, without waiting for the promised blessing, he disappeared among the trees.

On reaching the top of the hill, Wolsey descried the hut through an opening in the trees, at a few hundred yards distance. It was pleasantly situated on the brink of the lake, at the point where its width was greatest, and where it was fed by a brook that flowed into it from a large pool of water near Sunninghill.

From the high ground where Wolsey now stood, the view of the lake was beautiful. For nearly a mile its shining expanse was seen stretching out between banks of varied form,—sometimes embayed, sometimes running out into little headlands, but everywhere clothed with timber almost to the water's edge. Wild fowl skimmed over its glassy surface, or dipped in search of their finny prey; and here and there a heron might be detected standing in some shallow nook, and feasting on the smaller fry. A flight of cawing rooks were settling upon the tall trees on the right bank, and the voices of the thrush, the blackbird, and other feathered songsters, burst in redundant melody from the nearer groves.

A verdant path, partly beneath the trees, and partly on the side of the lake, led Wolsey to the forester's hut. Constructed of wood and clay, with a thatched roof, green with moss, and half overgrown with ivy, the little building was in admirable keeping with the surrounding

scenery. Opposite the door, and opening upon the lake, stood a little boat-house, and beside it, a few wooden steps, defended by a hand-rail, ran into the water. A few yards beyond the boat-house, the brook before mentioned emptied its waters into the lake.

Gazing with much internal satisfaction at the hut, Wolsey bade Patch dismount, and ascertain whether Mabel was within. The buffoon obeyed, tried the door, and, finding it fastened, knocked, but to no purpose.

After a pause of a few minutes, the cardinal was turning away in extreme disappointment, when a small skiff, rowed by a female hand, shot round an angle of the lake, and swiftly approached them. A glance from Patch would have told Wolsey, if he had required any such information, that this was the forester's granddaughter. Her beauty quite ravished him, and drew from him an exclamation of wonder and delight. Features regular, exquisitely molded, and of a joyous expression; a skin dyed like a peach by the sun, but so as to improve rather than impair its hue; eyes bright, laughing, and blue as a summer sky; ripe, ruddy lips, and pearly teeth; and hair of a light and glossy brown, constituted the sum of her attractions. Her sylph-like figure was charmingly displayed by the graceful exercise on which she was engaged, and her small hands, seemingly scarcely able to grasp an oar, impelled the skiff forward with marvelous velocity, and apparently without much exertion on her part.

Unabashed by the presence of the strangers, though Wolsey's attire could leave her in no doubt as to his high ecclesiastical dignity, she sprang ashore at the landing-place, and fastened her bark to the side of the boat-house.

"You are Mabel Lyndwood, I presume, fair maiden?" inquired the cardinal, in his blandest tones.

"Such is my name, your grace," she replied; "for your garb tells me I am addressing Cardinal Wolsey."

The cardinal graciously inclined his head.

"Chancing to ride in this part of the forest," he said, "and having heard of your beauty, I came to see whether the reality equaled the description, and I find it far transcends it."

Mabel blushed deeply, and cast down her eyes.

"Would that Henry could see her now!" thought the cardinal, "Anne Boleyn's reign were nigh an end. How long have you dwelt in this cottage, fair maid?" he added, aloud.

"My grandsire, Tristram Lyndwood, has lived here fifty years and more," replied Mabel; "but I have only been its inmate within these few weeks. Before that time, I lived at Chertsey, under the care of one of the lay sisters of the monastery there—sister Anastasia."

"And your parents—where are they?" asked the cardinal, curiously.

"Alas! your grace, I have none," replied Mabel, with a sigh. "Tristram Lyndwood is my only living relative. He used to come over once a month to see me at Chertsey—and latterly, finding his dwelling lonely, for he lost the old dame who tended it for him, he brought me to dwell with him. Sister Anastasia was loath to part with me—and I was grieved to leave her—but I could not refuse my grandsire."

"Of a surety not," replied the cardinal, musingly, and gazing hard at her. "And you know nothing of your parents?"

"Little, beyond this," replied Mabel:—"My father was a keeper of the forest, and being unhappily gored by a stag, perished of the wound—for a hurt from a hart's horn, as your grace knows, is certain death—and my mother pined after him, and speedily followed him to the

grave. I was then placed by my grandsire with sister Anastasia, as I have just related—and this is all my history."

"A simple, yet a curious one," said Wolsey, still musing. "You are the fairest maid of low degree I ever beheld. You saw the king at the chase the other day, Mabel?"

"Truly, did I, your grace," she replied, her eyes brightening, and her color rising—"and a right noble king he is."

"And as gentle and winning as he is goodly to look upon," said Wolsey, smiling.

"Report says otherwise," rejoined Mabel.

"Report speaks falsely," cried Wolsey; "I know him well—and he is what I describe him."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Mabel; "and I must own I formed the same opinion myself—for the smile he threw upon me was one of the sweetest and kindliest I ever beheld."

"Since you confess so much, fair maiden," rejoined Wolsey, "I will be equally frank, and tell you it was from the king's own lips I heard of your beauty."

"Your grace!" she exclaimed.

"Well, well," said Wolsey, smiling; "if the king is bewitched, I cannot marvel at it. And now, good day, fair maiden. You will hear more of me."

"Your grace will not refuse me your blessing?" said Mabel.

"Assuredly not, my child," replied Wolsey, spreading his hands over her. "All good angels and saints bless you, and hold you in their keeping. Mark my words—a great destiny awaits you. But in all changes, rest assured you will find a friend in Cardinal Wolsey."

"Your grace overwhelms me with kindness," cried Mabel, "nor can I conceive how I have found an interest

in your eyes—unless sister Anastasia, or father Anselm, of Chertsey Abbey, may have mentioned me to you."

"You have found a more potent advocate with me than either sister Anastasia or father Anselm," replied Wolsey; "and now, farewell."

And turning the head of his mule, he rode slowly away.

On the same day, there was a grand banquet in the castle, and, as usual, Wolsey took his station on the right of the sovereign, while the papal legate occupied a place on the left. Watching a favorable opportunity, Wolsey observed to Henry, that he had been riding that morning in the forest, and had seen the loveliest damsel that eyes ever fell upon.

"Ah! by our Lady! and who may she be?" asked the king, curiously.

"She can boast little in regard to birth, being grandchild to an old forester," replied Wolsey. "But your majesty saw her at the hunting-party the other day."

"Ah, now I bethink me of her," said Henry. "A comely damsel, in good sooth."

"I know not where her match is to be found," cried the cardinal. "Would your majesty had seen her skim over the lake in a fairy boat managed by herself, as I beheld her this morning. You would have taken her for a water-sprite, except that no water-sprite was half so beautiful."

"You speak in raptures, cardinal," cried Henry. "I must see this damsel again. Where does she dwell? I have heard,—but it has slipped my memory."

"In a hut near the great lake," replied Wolsey. "There is some mystery attached to her birth, which I have not yet fathomed."

"Leave me to unriddle it," replied the king, laughingly.

And he turned to talk on other subjects to Campeggio, but Wolsey felt satisfied that the device was successful.

Nor was he mistaken. As Henry retired from the banquet, he motioned the Duke of Suffolk towards him, and said, in an undertone—

"I shall go forth at dusk to-morrow even, in disguise, and shall require your attendance."

"On a love affair?" asked the duke, in the same tone.

"Perchance," replied Henry; "but I will explain myself more fully anon."

This muttered colloquy was overheard by Patch, and faithfully reported by him to the cardinal.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE VISIT OF THE TWO GUILDFORD MERCHANTS TO THE FORESTER'S HUT.

Tristram Lyndwood did not return home till late in the evening; and when informed of the cardinal's visit, he shook his head gravely.

"I am sorry we went to the hunting-party," he observed. "Valentine Hagthorne said mischief would come of it, and I wish I had attended to his advice."

"I see no mischief in the matter, grandsire," cried Mabel, "On the contrary, I think I have met with excellent fortune. The good cardinal promises me a high destiny, and says the king himself noticed me."

"Would his regards had fallen anywhere else than on you, child," rejoined Tristram. "But I warrant me, you told the cardinal your history—all you know of it, at least."

"I did so," she replied—"nor did I know I was doing any harm."

"Answer no such inquiries in future," said Tristram, angrily.

"But, grandfather, I could not refuse to answer the cardinal," she replied, in a deprecating voice.

"No more excuses, but attend to my injunctions," said Tristram. "Have you seen Morgan Fenwolf to-day?"

"No; and I care not if I never see him again," she replied, pettishly.

"You dislike him strangely, Mab," rejoined her grandfather,—"he is the best keeper in the forest, and makes no secret of his love for you."

"The very reason why I dislike him," she returned.

"By the same rule, if what the cardinal stated be true, —though, trust me, he was but jesting,—you ought to dislike the king. But get me my supper. I have need of it, for I have fasted long."

Mabel hastened to obey, and set a mess of hot pottage and other viands before him. Little more conversation passed between them, for the old man was weary, and sought his couch early.

That night, Mabel did nothing but dream of the king —of stately chambers, rich apparel, and countless attendants. She awoke, and finding herself in a lowly cottage, and without a single attendant, was, like other dreamers of imaginary splendor, greatly discontented.

The next morning, her grandsire went again to Bray Wood, and she was left to muse upon the event of the previous day. While busied about some trifling occupations, the door suddenly opened, and Morgan Fenwolf entered the cottage. He was followed by a tall man, with a countenance of extreme paleness, but a noble and commanding figure. There was something so striking in the appearance of the latter person, that it riveted the attention of Mabel. But no corresponding effect was produced on the stranger, for he scarcely bestowed a look upon her.

Morgan Fenwolf hastily asked whether her grandsire was at home, or near at hand, and being answered in the negative, appeared much disappointed. He then said that he must borrow the skiff for a short while, as he wished to visit some nets on the lake. Mabel readily assented, and the stranger quitted the house, while Fenwolf lingered to offer some attention to Mabel, which was so ill received that he was fain to hurry forth to the boathouse, where he embarked with his companion. As soon as the plash of oars announced their departure, Mabel went forth to watch them. The stranger, who was seated in the stern of the boat, for the first time, fixed his large

melancholy eyes full upon her, and did not withdraw his gaze till an angle of the lake hid him from view.

Marveling who he could be, and reproaching herself for not questioning Fenwolf on the subject, Mabel resolved to repair the error when the skiff was brought back. But the opportunity did not speedily occur. Hours flew by; the shades of evening drew on; but neither Fenwolf nor the stranger returned.

Soon after dusk, her grandfather came home. He did not express the least astonishment at Fenwolf's prolonged absence, but said he was sure to be back in the course of the evening, and the skiff was not wanted.

"He will bring us a fine jack, or a carp for dinner tomorrow, I'll warrant me," he said. "If he had returned in time, we might have had fish for supper. No matter. I must make shift with the mutton pie and a rasher of bacon. Morgan did not mention the name of his companion, you say?"

"He did not," replied Mabel; "but I hope he will bring him with him. He is the goodliest gentleman I ever beheld."

"What! a goodlier gentleman than the king?" cried Tristram.

"Nay, they should not be compared," replied Mabel: "the one is stout and burly; the other, slight, long-visaged, and pale, but handsome withal,—very handsome."

"Well, I dare say I shall see him anon," said Tristram; "and now for supper, for I am as sharp-set as a wolf;—and so is old Hubert," he added, glancing affectionately at the hound by which he was attended.

Mabel placed the better part of a huge pie before him, which the old forester attacked with great zeal. He then fell to work upon some slices of bacon toasted over the embers, by his granddaughter, and having washed them down with a jug of mead, declared he had supped

famously. While taking care of himself, he did not forget his hound. From time to time, he threw him morsels of the pie, and when he had done, he gave him a large platter-full of bones.

"Old Hubert has served me faithfully nigh twenty years," he said, patting the hound's shaggy neck, "and must not be neglected."

Throwing a log of wood on the fire, he drew his chair into the ingle-nook, and disposed himself to slumber. Meanwhile, Mabel busied herself about her household concerns, and was singing a lulling melody to her grandfather, in a voice of exquisite sweetness, when a loud tap was heard at the door. Tristram roused himself from his doze, and old Hubert growled menacingly.

"Quiet, Hubert—quiet!" cried Tristram. "It cannot be Morgan Fenwolf," he added. "He would never knock thus. Come in, friend, whoever thou art."

At this invitation, two persons darkened the doorway. The foremost was a man of bulky frame, and burly demeanor. He was attired in a buff jerkin, over which he wore a loose brown surcoat; had a flat velvet cap on his head; and carried a stout staff in his hand. His face was broad and handsome, though his features could scarcely be discerned in the doubtful light to which they were submitted. A reddish-colored beard clothed his chin. His companion, who appeared a trifle the taller of the two, and equally robust, was wrapped in a cloak of dark green camlet.

"Give you good e'en, friend," said the foremost stranger to the forester. "We are belated travelers, on our way from Guildford to Windsor, and, seeing your cottage, have called to obtain some refreshment before we cross the great park. We do not ask you to bestow a meal upon us, but will gladly pay for the best your larder affords."

"You shall have it, and welcome, my masters," replied Tristram; "but I am afraid my humble fare will scarcely suit you."

"Fear nothing," replied the other; "we have good appetites, and are not over dainty. Beshrew me, friend," he added, regarding Mabel, "you have a comely daughter."

"She is my granddaughter, sir," replied Tristram.

"Well, your granddaughter, then," said the other; "by the mass, a lovely wench. We have none such in Guildford, and I doubt if the king hath such in Windsor Castle. What say you, Charles Brandon?"

"It were treason to agree with you, Harry Le Roy," replied Brandon, laughing; "for they say the king visits with the halter all those who disparage the charms of the lady Anne Boleyn. But comparisons apart, this damsel is very fair."

"You will discompose her, my masters, if you praise her thus to her face," said Tristram, somewhat testily. "Here, Mab, bring forth all my scanty larder affords, and put some rashers of bacon on the fire."

"Cold meat and bread will suffice for us," said Harry; "we will not trouble the damsel to play the cook."

With this, Mabel, who appeared a good deal embarrassed by the presence of the strangers, spread a cloth of snow-white linen on the little table, and placed the remains of the pie and a large oven cake before them. The newcomers sate down, and ate heartily of the humble viands,—he who had answered to the name of Harry frequently stopping, in the course of his repast, to compliment his fair attendant.

"By our Lady, I have never been so waited on before," he added, rising, and removing his stool towards the fire, while his companion took up a position, with his back against the wall, near the fireplace. "And now, my

pretty Mabel, have you never a cup of ale to wash down the pie?"

"I can offer you a draught of right good mead, master," said Tristram; "and that is the only liquor my cottage can furnish."

"Nothing can be better," replied Harry. "The mead, by all means."

While Mabel went to draw the liquor, Tristram fixed his eyes on Harry, whose features were now fully revealed by the light of the fire.

"Why do you look at me so hard, friend?" demanded Harry bluffly.

"I have seen some one very like you, master," replied Tristram; "and one whom it is no light honor to resemble."

"You mean the king," returned Harry, laughing. "You are not the first person who has thought me like him."

"You are vain of the likeness, I see, master," replied Tristram, joining in the laugh. "How say you, Mab?" he added to his granddaughter, who at that moment returned with a jug and a couple of drinking-horns. "Whom does this gentleman resemble?"

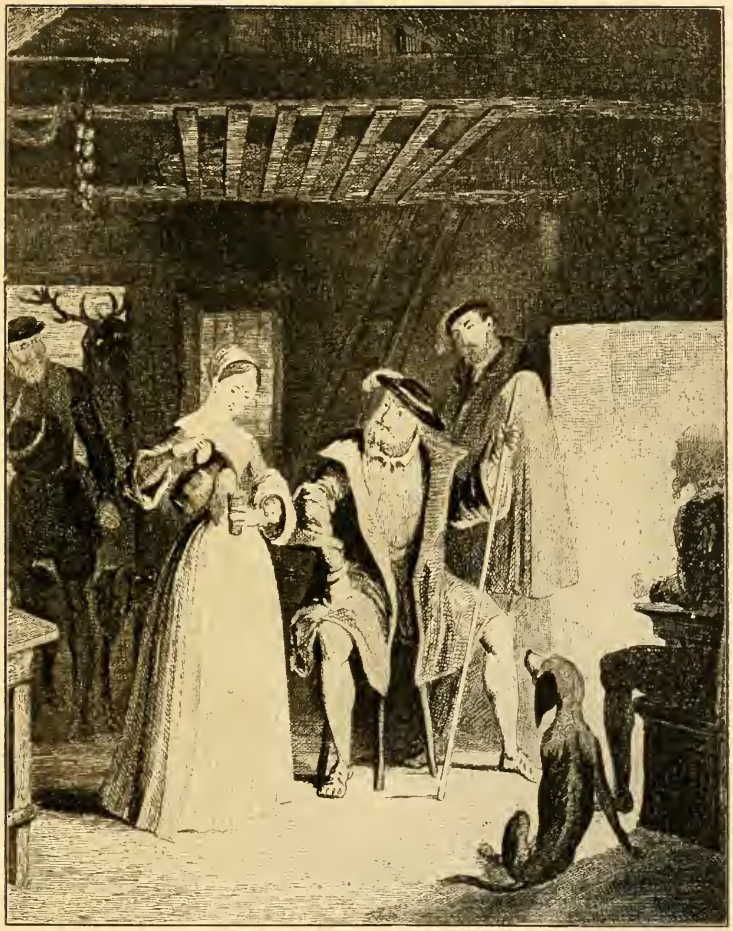
"No one," returned Mabel, without raising her eyes.

"No one!" echoed Harry, chucking her under the chin. "Look me full in the face, and you will find out your mistake. Marry, if I were the royal Henry, instead of what I am, a plain Guildford merchant, I should prefer you to Anne Boleyn."

"Is that said in good sooth, sir?" asked Mabel, slightly raising her eyes, and instantly dropping them before the ardent gaze of the self-styled merchant.

"In good sooth and sober truth," replied Harry, rounding his arm, and placing his hand on his lusty thigh, in true royal fashion.

"Were you the royal Henry, I should not care for your



"If I were the Royal Henry, instead of a plain Guilford merchant, I should prefer you to Anne Boleyn!" said the stranger. Page 132.

—*Windsor Castle.*

preference," said Mabel, more confidently. "My grandsire says the king changes his love as often as the moon changes—nay, oftener."

"God's death!—your grandsire is a false knave to say so!" cried Harry.

"Heaven help us! you swear the king's oaths," said Mabel.

"And wherefore not, sweetheart?" said Harry, checking himself. "It is enough to make one swear, and in royal fashion, too, to hear one's liege lord unjustly accused. I have ever heard the king styled a mirror of constancy. How say you, Charles Brandon?—can you not give him a good character?"

"Oh! an excellent character," said Brandon. "He is constancy itself—while the fit lasts," he added, aside.

"You hear what my friend says, sweetheart," observed Harry, "and I assure you he has the best opportunities of judging. But I'll be sworn you did not believe your grandsire when he thus maligned the king."

"She contradicted me flatly," said Tristram; "but pour out the mead, girl. Our guests are waiting for it."

While Mabel, in compliance with her grandsire's directions, filled the horn, the door of the cottage was noiselessly opened by Morgan Fenwolf, who stepped in, followed by Bawsey. He stared inquisitively at the strangers, but both were so much occupied by the damsel that he remained unnoticed. A sign from the old forester told him he had better retire. Jealous curiosity, however, detained him; and he tarried till Harry had received the cup from Mabel, and drained it to her health. He then drew back, closed the door softly, and joined a dark and mysterious figure, with hideous lineaments and an antlered helm upon its brows, lurking outside the cottage.

Meanwhile, a cup of mead having been offered to Bran-

don, he observed to his companion, "We must now be setting forth on our journey. Night is advancing, and we have five long miles to traverse across the Great Park."

"I would stay where I am," rejoined Harry, "and make a bench near the fire serve me in lieu of a couch, but that business requires our presence at the castle to-night. There is payment for our meal, friend," he added, giving a mark to Tristram, "and as we shall probably return to-morrow night, we will call and have another supper with you. Provide us a capon, and some fish from the lake."

"You pay as you swear, good sir, royally," replied Tristram. "You shall have a better supper to-morrow night."

"You have a dangerous journey before you, sir," said Mabel. "They say there are plunderers and evil spirits in the Great Park."

"I have no fear of any such, sweetheart," replied Harry; "I have a strong arm to defend myself, and so has my friend Charles Brandon. And as to evil spirits, a kiss from you will shield me from all ill."

And as he spoke, he drew her towards him, and, clasping her in his arms, imprinted a score of rapid kisses on her lips.

"Hold! hold, master!" cried Tristram, rising angrily; "this may not be. 'Tis an arrant abuse of hospitality."

"Nay, be not offended, good friend," replied Harry, laughing, "I am on the look-out for a wife, and I know not but I may take your granddaughter with me to Guildford."

"She is not to be so lightly won," cried Tristram, "for though I am but a poor forester, I rate her as highly as the haughtiest noble can rate his child."

"And with reason," said Harry. "Good-night, sweet-

heart!" "By my crown! Suffolk," he exclaimed to his companion, as he quitted the cottage, "she is an angel, and shall be mine."

"Not if my arm serves me truly," muttered Fenwolf, who, with his mysterious companion, had stationed himself at the window of the hut.

"Do him no injury," returned the other; "he is only to be made captive—mark that. And now to apprise Sir Thomas Wyat. We must intercept them before they reach their horses."

CHAPTER IV.

HOW HERNE THE HUNTER SHOWED THE EARL OF SURREY THE FAIR GERALDINE IN A VISION.

On the third day after Surrey's imprisonment in the keep, he was removed to the Norman Tower. The chamber allotted him was square, tolerably lofty, and had two narrow pointed windows, on either side, looking on the one hand into the upper quadrangle, and on the other into the middle ward. At the same time, permission was accorded him to take exercise on the battlements of the Round Tower, or within the dry and grassy moat at its foot.

The fair Geraldine, he was informed, had been sent to the royal palace at Greenwich; but her absence occasioned him little disquietude, because he knew, if she had remained at Windsor, he would not have been allowed to see her.

On the same day that Surrey was removed to the Norman Tower, the Duke of Richmond quitted the castle without assigning any motive for his departure, or even taking leave of his friend. At first, some jealous mistrust that he might be gone to renew his suit to the fair Geraldine troubled the earl; but he strongly combated the feeling, as calculated, if indulged, to destroy his tranquillity, and by fixing his thoughts sedulously on other subjects, he speedily succeeded in overcoming it.

On that night, while occupied in a translation of the Æneid, which he had commenced, he remained at his task to a late hour. The midnight bell had tolled, when, looking up, he was startled by perceiving a tall dark figure standing silent and motionless beside him.

Independently of the difficulty of accounting for its presence the appearance of the figure was, in itself, sufficiently appalling. It was above the ordinary stature, and was enveloped in a long black cloak, while a tall, conical black cap, which added to its height, and increased the hideousness of its features, covered its head.

For a few minutes, Surrey remained gazing at the figure in mute astonishment, during which it maintained the same motionless posture. At length, he was able to murmur forth the interrogation—"Who art thou?"

"A friend," replied the figure, in a sepulchral tone.

"Are you man or spirit?" demanded Surrey.

"It matters not,—I am a friend," rejoined the figure.

"On what errand come you here?" asked Surrey.

"To serve you," replied the figure;—"to liberate you. You shall go hence with me if you choose."

"On what condition?" rejoined Surrey.

"We will speak of that when we are out of the castle, and on the green sod of the forest," returned the figure.

"You tempt in vain," cried Surrey. "I will not go with you. I recognize in you the demon hunter Herne."

The figure laughed hollowly—so hollowly, that Surrey's flesh crept upon his bones.

"You are right, lord of Surrey," he said; "I *am* Herne the hunter. You must join me. Sir Thomas Wyat is already one of my band."

"You lie, false fiend!" rejoined Surrey. "Sir Thomas Wyat is in France."

"It is you who lie, lord of Surrey," replied Herne; "Sir Thomas Wyat is now in the Great Park. You shall see him in a few minutes, if you will come with me."

"I disbelieve you, tempter!" cried Surrey, indignantly. "Wyat is too good a Christian, and too worthy a knight to league with a demon."

Again Herne laughed bitterly.

"Sir Thomas Wyat told you he would seek me out," said the demon. "He did so, and gave himself to me, for Anne Boleyn."

"But you have no power over her, demon?" cried Surrey, shuddering.

"You will learn whether I have or not, in due time," replied Herne. "Do you refuse to go with me?"

"I refuse to deliver myself to perdition," rejoined the earl.

"An idle fear," rejoined Herne. "I care not for your soul—you will destroy it without my aid. I have need of you. You shall be back again in this chamber before the officer visits it in the morning, and no one shall be aware of your absence. Come, or I will bear you hence."

"You dare not touch me," replied Surrey, placing his hand upon his breast; "I am armed with a holy relic."

"I know it," said Herne; "and I feel its power, or I would not have trifled with you thus long. But it cannot shield you from a rival. You believe the fair Geraldine constant—ha?"

"I know her to be so," said Surrey.

A derisive laugh broke from Herne.

"Peace, mocking fiend!" cried Surrey, furiously.

"I laugh to think how you are deceived," said Herne. "Would you behold your mistress now?—would you see how she conducts herself during your absence?"

"If you choose to try me, I will not oppose the attempt," replied Surrey, "but it will be futile."

"Remove the relic from your person," rejoined Herne. "Place it upon the table, within your grasp, and you shall see her."

Surrey hesitated; but he was not proof against the low mocking laugh of the demon.

"No harm can result from it," he cried, at length, detaching the relic from his neck, and laying it on the table.

"Behold!" said the demon, and instantly a vision of the fair Geraldine shown forth. Page 139.

—*Windsor Castle.*

"Extinguish the light!" cried Herne, in a commanding voice.

Surrey instantly sprang to his feet, and dashed the lamp off the table.

"Behold!" cried the demon.

And instantly a vision, representing the form and lineaments of the fair Geraldine to the life, shone forth against the opposite wall of the chamber. At the feet of the visionary damsel knelt a shape resembling the Duke of Richmond. He was pressing the hand extended to him by the fair Geraldine to his lips, and a smile of triumph irradiated his features.

"Such is man's friendship—such woman's constancy!" cried Herne. "Are you not satisfied?"

"I am, that you have deceived me, false spirit!" cried the earl. "I would not believe the fair Geraldine inconstant, though all hell told me so."

A terrible laugh broke from the demon, and the vision faded away. All became perfect darkness, and for a few moments the earl remained silent. He then called to the demon, but receiving no answer, put forth his hand towards the spot where he had stood. He was gone.

Confounded, Surrey returned to the table, and searched for the relic, but, with a feeling of indescribable anguish and self-reproach, found that it had likewise disappeared.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT BEFELL SIR THOMAS WYAT IN THE SANDSTONE CAVE. —AND HOW HE DRANK A MADDENING POTION.

The cave in which Sir Thomas Wyat found himself, on the removal of the bandage from his eyes, was apparently—for it was only lighted by a single torch,—of considerable width and extent, and hewn out of a bed of soft sandstone. The roof, which might be about ten feet high, was supported by the trunks of three large trees, rudely fashioned into pillars. There were several narrow lateral passages within it, apparently communicating with other caverns; and at the further end, which was almost buried in obscurity, there was a gleam seemingly occasioned by the reflection of the torchlight upon water. On the right hand, stood a pile of huge stones, disposed somewhat in the form of a Druidical altar, on the top of which, as on a throne, sat the demon hunter, surrounded by his satellites—one of whom, horned and bearded like a satyr, had clambered the roughened sides of the central pillar, and held a torch over the captive's head.

Half-stifled by the noxious vapor he had inhaled, and blinded by the tightness of the bandage, it was some time before Wyat fully recovered his powers of sight and utterance.

"Why am I brought hither, false fiend?" he demanded, at length.

"To join my band," replied the demon, harshly and imperiously.

"Never!" rejoined Wyat. "I will have nought to do with you except as regards our compact."

"What I require from you *is* part of our compact," rejoined the demon. "He who has once closed hands with Herne the hunter cannot retreat. But I mean you fairly, and will not delude you with false expectations. What you seek cannot be accomplished on the instant. Ere three days, Anne Boleyn shall be yours."

"Give me some proof that you are not deceiving me, spirit," said Wyat.

"Come, then!" replied Herne. So saying, he sprang from the stone, and, taking Wyat's hand, led him towards the lower end of the cave, which gradually declined till it reached the edge of a small, but apparently deep pool of water, the level of which rose above the rock that formed its boundary.

"Remove the torch!" thundered the demon to those behind. "Now summon your false love, Sir Thomas Wyat," he added, as his orders were obeyed, and the light was taken into one of the side passages, so that its gleam no longer fell upon the water.

"Appear, Anne Boleyn!" cried Wyat.

Upon this, a shadowy resemblance of her he had invoked flitted over the surface of the water, with hands outstretched towards him. So moved was Wyat by the vision, that he would have flung himself into the pool to grasp it, if he had not been forcibly detained by the demon. During the struggle, the figure vanished, and all was buried in darkness.

"I have said she shall be yours," cried Herne; "but time is required for the accomplishment of my purpose. I have only power over her when evil is predominant in her heart. But such moments are not unfrequent," he added, with a bitter laugh. "And now to the chase. I promise you it will be a wilder and more exciting ride than you ever enjoyed in the king's company. To the chase!—to the chase, I say!"

Sounding a call upon his horn, the light instantly reappeared. All was stir and confusion amid the impish troop—and presently afterwards, a number of coal-black horses, and hounds of the same hue, leashed in couples, were brought out of one of the side passages. Among the latter were two large sable hounds of Saint Hubert's breed, whom Herne summoned to his side by the names of Saturn and Dragon.

A slight noise, as of a blow dealt against a tree, was now heard overhead, and Herne, imposing silence on the group by a hasty gesture, assumed an attitude of fixed attention. The stroke was repeated a second time.

"It is our brother, Morgan Fenwolf," cried the demon.

Catching hold of a chain hanging from the roof, which Wyat had not hitherto noticed, he swung himself into a crevice above, and disappeared from view. During the absence of their leader, the troop remained motionless and silent.

A few minutes afterwards, Herne reappeared at the upper end of the cave. He was accompanied by Fenwolf, between whom and Wyat a slight glance of recognition passed.

The order being given by the demon to mount, Wyat, after an instant's hesitation, seized the flowing mane of the horse nearest him—for it was furnished neither with saddle nor bridle—and vaulted upon its back. At the same moment, Herne uttered a wild cry, and plunging into the pool, sunk within it. Wyat's steed followed, and swam swiftly forward beneath the water.

When Wyat rose to the surface, he found himself in the open lake, which was gleaming in the moonlight. Before him he beheld Herne clambering the bank, accompanied by his two favorite hounds, while a large white owl wheeled round his head, hooting loudly. Behind came the grisly cavalcade, with their hounds, swimming

from beneath a bank covered by thick, overhanging trees, which completely screened the secret entrance to the cave. Having no control over his steed, Wyat was obliged to surrender himself to its guidance, and was soon placed by the side of the demon hunter.

"Pledge me, Sir Thomas Wyat," said Herne, unslinging a gourd-shaped flask from his girdle, and offering it to him. "'Tis a rare wine, and will prevent you from suffering from your bath, as well as give you spirits for the chase."

Chilled to the bone by the immersion he had undergone, Wyat did not refuse the offer, but placing the flask to his lips, took a deep draught from it. The demon uttered a low, bitter laugh, as he received back the flask, and he slung it to his girdle without tasting it.

The effect of the potion upon Wyat was extraordinary. The whole scene seemed to dance round him;—the impish figures in the lake, or upon its bank, assumed forms yet more fantastic; the horses looked like monsters of the deep; the hounds like wolves and ferocious beasts; the branches of the trees writhed and shot forward like hissing serpents;—and though this effect speedily passed off, it left behind it a wild and maddening feeling of excitement.

"A noble hart is lying in yon glen," said Morgan Fenwolf, advancing towards his leader; "I tracked his slot thither this evening."

"Haste, and unharbor him," replied Herne, "and as soon as you rouse him, give the halloa."

Fenwolf obeyed; and, shortly afterwards, a cry was heard from the glen.

"List halloa! list halloa!" cried Herne, "that's he! that's he! hyke, Saturn! hyke, Dragon!—Away!—away, my merry men all."

CHAPTER VI.

HOW SIR THOMAS WYAT HUNTED WITH HERNE.

Accompanied by Wyat, and followed by the whole cavalcade, Herne dashed into the glen, where Fenwolf awaited him. Threading the hollow, the troop descried the hart, flying swiftly along a sweeping glade, at some two hundred yards distance. The glade was passed—a woody knoll skirted—a valley traversed—and the hart plunged into a thick grove clothing the side of Hawk's Hill. But it offered him no secure retreat. Dragon and Saturn were close upon him, and behind them came Herne, crashing through the branches of the trees, and heedless of all impediments. By and by, the thicket became more open, and they entered Cranbourne Chase. But the hart soon quitted it to return to the Great Park, and darted down a declivity skirted by a line of noble oaks. Here he was so hotly pressed by his fierce opponents, whose fangs he could almost feel within his haunches, that he suddenly stopped, and stood at bay, receiving the foremost of his assailants, Saturn, on the points of his horns. But his defense, though gallant, was unavailing. In another instant, Herne came up, and dismounting, called off Dragon, who was about to take the place of his wounded companion. Drawing a knife from his girdle, the hunter threw himself on the ground, and advancing on all fours, towards the hart, could scarcely be distinguished himself from some denizen of the forest. As he approached, the hart snorted and bellowed fiercely, and dashed its horns against him; but the blow was received by the hunter upon his own antlered helm, and at the same moment, his

knife was thrust to the hilt into the stag's throat, and it fell to the ground.

Springing to his feet, Herne whooped joyfully, placed his bugle to his lips, and blew the dead mot. He then shouted to Fenwolf to call away and couple the hounds, and striking off the deer's right fore foot with his knife, presented it to Wyat. Several large leafy branches being gathered and laid upon the ground, the hart was placed upon them, and Herne commenced breaking him up, as the process of dismembering the deer is termed in the language of woodcraft. His first step was to cut off the animal's head, which he performed by a single blow with his heavy trenchant knife.

"Give the hounds the flesh," he said, delivering the trophy to Fenwolf; "but keep the antlers, for it is a great deer of head."

Placing the head on a hunting-pole, Fenwolf withdrew to an open space among the trees, and halloing to the others, they immediately cast off the hounds, who rushed towards him, leaping and baying at the stag's head, which he alternately raised and lowered, until they were sufficiently excited, when he threw it on the ground before them.

While this was going forward, the rest of the band were occupied in various ways,—some striking a light with flint and steel—some gathering together sticks and dried leaves to form a fire—others producing various strange-shaped cooking utensils—while others were assisting their leader in his butcherly task, which he executed with infinite skill and expedition.

As soon as the fire was kindled, Herne distributed certain portions of the venison among his followers, which were instantly thrown upon the embers to broil; while a few choice morsels were stewed in a pan with wine, and subsequently offered to the leader and Wyat.

This hasty repast concluded, the demon ordered the fire to be extinguished, and the quarters of the deer to be carried to the cave. He then mounted his steed, and attended by Wyat and the rest of his troop, except those engaged in executing his orders, galloped towards Snow Hill, where he speedily succeeded in unharboring another noble hart.

Away then went the whole party—stag, hounds, huntsmen, sweeping, like a dark cloud, down the hill, and crossing the wide moonlit glade, studded with noble trees, on the west of the great avenue.

For awhile, the hart held a course parallel with the avenue; he then dashed across it, threaded the intricate woods on the opposite side, tracked a long glen, and leaping the pales, entered the Home Park. It almost seemed as if he designed to seek shelter within the castle, for he made straight towards it, and was only diverted by Herne himself, who, shooting past him with incredible swiftness, turned him towards the lower part of the park.

Here the chase continued with unabated ardor, until, reaching the banks of the Thames, the hart plunged into it, and suffered himself to be carried noiselessly down the current. But Herne followed him along the banks, and when sufficiently near, dashed into the stream, and drove him again ashore.

Once more they flew across the Home Park—once more they leaped its pales—once more they entered the Great Park—but this time, the stag took the direction of Englefield Green. He was not, however, allowed to break forth into the open country; but driven again into the thick woods, he held on with wondrous speed, till the lake appeared in view. In another instant, he was swimming across it.

Before the eddies occasioned by the affrighted animal's plunge had described a wide ring, Herne had quitted his

steed, and was cleaving with rapid strokes, the waters of the lake. Finding escape impossible, the hart turned to meet him, and sought to strike him with his horns—but as in the case of his ill-fated brother of the wood, the blow was warded by the antlered helm of the swimmer. The next moment, the clear water was dyed with blood, and Herne, catching the gasping animal by the head, guided his body to shore.

Again the process of breaking up the stag was gone through; and when Herne had concluded his task, he once more offered his gourd to Sir Thomas Wyat. Reckless of the consequences, the knight placed the flask to his lips, and draining it to the last drop, fell from his horse insensible.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW WYAT BEHELD MABEL LYNDWOOD; AND HOW HE WAS ROWED BY MORGAN FENWOLF UPON THE LAKE.

When perfect consciousness returned to him, Wyat found himself lying upon a pallet in what he at first took to be the cell of an anchorite; but as the recollection of recent events arose more distinctly before him, he guessed it to be a chamber connected with the sandstone cave. A small lamp, placed in a recess, lighted the cell; and upon a footstool by his bed stood a jug of water, and a cup containing some drink, in which herbs had evidently been infused. Well-nigh emptying the jug, for he felt parched with thirst, Wyat attired himself, took up the lamp, and walked into the main cavern. No one was there, nor could he obtain any answer to his calls. Evidences, however, were not wanting to prove that a feast had recently been held there. On one side were the scarcely-extinguished embers of a large wood fire; and in the midst of the chamber was a rude table, covered with drinking horns and wooden platters, as well as with the remains of three or four haunches of venison. While contemplating this scene Wyat heard footsteps in one of the lateral passages, and presently afterwards Morgan Fenwolf made his appearance.

"So you are come round at last, Sir Thomas," observed the keeper, in a slightly sarcastic tone.

"What has ailed me?" asked Wyat, in surprise.

"You have had a fever for three days," returned Fenwolf, "and have been raving like a madman."

"Three days!" muttered Wyat. "The false, juggling fiend promised her to me on the third day!"

"Fear not;—Herne will be as good as his word," said Fenwolf; "but will you go forth with me. I am about to visit my nets. It is a fine day, and a row on the lake will do you good."

Wyat acquiesced, and followed Fenwolf, who returned along the passage. It grew narrower at the sides, and lower in the roof, as they advanced, until at last they were compelled to move forward on their hands and knees. For some space, the passage, or rather hole, (for it was nothing more,) ran on a level. A steep and tortuous ascent then commenced, which brought them to an outlet concealed by a large stone. Pushing it aside, Fenwolf crept forth, and immediately afterwards, Wyat emerged into a grove, through which, on one side, the gleaming waters of the lake were discernible. The keeper's first business was to replace the stone, which was so screened by brambles and bushes that it could not, unless careful search were made, be detected.

Making his way through the trees to the side of the lake, Fenwolf marched along the greensward, in the direction of Tristram Lyndwood's cottage. Wyat mechanically followed him: but he was so preoccupied, that he scarcely heeded the fair Mabel, nor was it till after his embarkation in the skiff with the keeper, when she came forth to look at them, that he was at all struck with her beauty. He then inquired her name from Fenwolf.

"She is called Mabel Lyndwood, and is an old forester's granddaughter," replied the other, somewhat gruffly.

"And do you seek her love?" asked Wyat.

"Ay, and wherefore not?" asked Fenwolf, with a look of displeasure.

"Nay, I know not, friend," rejoined Wyat. "She is a comely damsel."

"What!—comelier than the Lady Anne?" demanded Fenwolf, spitefully.

"I said not so," replied Wyat; "but she is very fair, and looks true-hearted."

Fenwolf glanced at him from under his brows; and plunging his oars into the water, soon carried him out of sight of the maiden.

It was high noon, and the day was one of resplendent loveliness. The lake sparkled in the sunshine, and as they shot past its tiny bays and woody headlands, new beauties were every moment revealed to them. But while the scene softened Wyat's feelings, it filled him with intolerable remorse, and so poignant did his emotions become, that he pressed his hands upon his eyes to shut out the lovely prospect. When he looked up again, the scene was changed. The skiff had entered a narrow creek, arched over by huge trees, and looking as dark and gloomy as the rest of the lake was fair and smiling. It was closed in by a high overhanging bank, crested by two tall trees, whose tangled roots protruded through it, like monstrous reptiles, while their branches cast a heavy shade over the deep, sluggish water.

"Why have you come here?" demanded Wyat, looking uneasily round the forbidding spot.

"You will discover anon," replied Fenwolf, moodily.

"Go back into the sunshine, and take me to some pleasant bank,—I will not land here," said Wyat, sternly.

"Needs must when—I need not remind you of the proverb," rejoined Fenwolf, with a sneer.

"Give me the oars, thou malapert knave!" cried Wyat, fiercely; "and I will put myself ashore."

"Keep quiet," said Fenwolf; "you must, perforce, abide our master's coming."

Wyat gazed at the keeper for a moment, as if with the intention of throwing him overboard; but abandoning the idea, he rose up in the boat, and caught at what he took to be a root of the tree above. To his surprise and alarm

it closed upon him with an iron grasp, and he felt himself dragged upwards, while the skiff, impelled by a sudden stroke from Morgan Fenwolf, shot from beneath him. All Wyat's efforts to disengage himself were vain, and a wild, demoniacal laugh, echoed by a chorus of voices, proclaimed him in the power of Herne the hunter. The next moment, he was set on the top of the bank, while the demon greeted him with a mocking laugh.

"So, you thought to escape me, Sir Thomas Wyat!" he cried in a taunting tone—"but any such attempt will prove fruitless. The murderer may repent the blow when dealt; the thief may desire to restore the gold he has purloined; the barterer of his soul may rue his bargain;—but they are Satan's nevertheless. You are mine, and nothing can redeem you!"

"Woe is me, that it should be so!" groaned Wyat.

"Lamentation is useless and unworthy of you," rejoined Herne, scornfully. "Your wish will be speedily accomplished. This very night your kingly rival shall be placed in your hands."

"Ha!" exclaimed Wyat, the flame of jealousy again rising within his breast.

"You can make your own terms with him for the Lady Anne," pursued Herne. "His life will be at your disposal."

"Do you promise this?" cried Wyat.

"Ay," replied Herne. "Put yourself under the conduct of Fenwolf, and all shall happen as you desire. We shall meet again at night. I have other business on hand now. Meschines," he added, to one of his attendants, "go with Sir Thomas to the skiff."

The personage who received the command, and who was wildly and fantastically habited, beckoned Wyat to follow him, and, after many twistings and turnings, brought them to the edge of the lake, where the skiff was

lying, with Fenwolf reclining at full length upon its benches. He arose, however, quickly, on the appearance of Meschines, and asked him for some provisions, which the latter promised to bring; and while Wyat got into the skiff, he disappeared, but returned, a few minutes afterwards, with a basket, which he gave to the keeper.

Crossing the lake, Fenwolf then shaped his course towards a verdant bank, enameled with wild flowers, where he landed. The basket being opened was found to contain a flask of wine and the better part of a venison pasty, of which Wyat, whose appetite was keen enough after his long fasting, ate heartily. He then stretched himself on the velvet sod and dropped into a tranquil slumber, which lasted to a late hour in the evening. He was roused from it by a hand laid on his shoulder, while a deep voice thundered in his ear—"Up, up, Sir Thomas, and follow me, and I will place the king in your hands!"

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THE KING AND THE DUKE OF SUFFOLK WERE ASSAILED BY HERNE'S BAND; AND WHAT FOLLOWED THE ATTACK.

Henry and Suffolk, on leaving the forester's hut, took their way for a short space along the side of the lake, and then turned into a path, leading through the trees up the eminence on the left. The king was in a joyous mood, and made no attempt to conceal the passion with which the fair damsel had inspired him.

"I' faith!" he cried, "the cardinal has a quick eye for a pretty wench. I have heard that he loves one in secret; and I am therefore the more beholden to him for discovering Mabel to me."

"You forget, my liege, that it is his object to withdraw your regards from the Lady Anne Boleyn," remarked Suffolk.

"I care not what his motive may be, as long as the result is so satisfactory," returned Henry. "Confess now, Suffolk, you never beheld a figure so perfect—a complexion so blooming—or eyes so bright. As to her lips, by my soul I never tasted such!"

"And your majesty is not inexperienced in such matters," laughed Suffolk. "For my own part, I was as much struck by her grace as by her beauty, and can scarcely persuade myself she can be nothing more than a mere forester's granddaughter."

"Wolsey told me there was a mystery about her birth," rejoined Henry; "but, pest on it! her beauty drove all recollection of the matter out of my head. I will go back, and question her now."

"Your majesty forgets that your absence from the castle will occasion surprise, if not alarm," said Suffolk. "The mystery will keep till to-morrow."

"Tut, tut—I *will* return," said the king, perversely. And Suffolk, knowing his wilfulness, and that all remonstrance would prove fruitless, retraced his steps with him.

They had not proceeded far, when they perceived a female figure at the bottom of the ascent, just where the path turned off on the margin of the lake.

"As I live, there she is!" exclaimed the king, joyfully. "She has divined my wishes, and is come herself to tell me her history."

And he sprang forward, while Mabel advanced rapidly towards him.

They met half way, and Henry would have caught her in his arms, but she avoided him, exclaiming, in a tone of confusion and alarm—"Thank Heaven! I have found you, sire!"

"Thank Heaven too, sweetheart!" rejoined Henry; "I would not hide when you are the seeker. So you know me,—ha?"

"I knew you at first," replied Mabel, confusedly. "I saw you at the great hunting party; and, once beheld, your majesty is not easily forgotten."

"Ha! by Saint George! you turn a compliment as soothly as the most practised dame at court," cried Henry, catching her hand.

"Beseech your majesty, release me!" returned Mabel, struggling to get free. "I did not follow you on the light errand you suppose, but to warn you of danger. Before you quitted my grandsire's cottage, I told you this part of the forest was haunted by plunderers and evil beings, and apprehensive lest some mischance might befall you, I opened the window softly to look after you——"

"And you overheard me tell the Duke of Suffolk how

much smitten I was with your beauty, ha?" interrupted the king, squeezing her hand—"and how resolved I was to make you mine,—ha! sweetheart?"

"The words I heard were of very different import, my liege," rejoined Mabel. "You were menaced by miscreants who purposed to waylay you before you could reach your steed."

"Let them come," replied Henry, carelessly, "they shall pay for their villainy. How many were there?"

"Two, sire," answered Mabel; "but one of them was Herne, the weird hunter of the forest. He said he would summon his band to make you captive. What can your strong arm, even aided by that of the Duke of Suffolk, avail against numbers?"

"Captive! ha!" exclaimed the king. "Said the knave so?"

"He did, sire," replied Mabel; "and I knew it was Herne by his antlered helm."

"There is reason in what the damsel says, my liege," interposed Suffolk. "If possible, you had better avoid an encounter with the villains."

"My hands itch to give them a lesson," rejoined Henry; "but I will be ruled by you. God's death! I will return to-morrow and hunt them down like so many wolves."

"Where are your horses, sire?" asked Mabel.

"Tied to a tree at the foot of the hill," replied Henry. "But I have attendants midway between this spot and Snow Hill."

"This way, then!" said Mabel, breaking from him, and darting into a narrow path among the trees.

Henry ran after her, but was not agile enough to overtake her. At length, she stopped.

"If your majesty will pursue this path," she cried, "you will come to an open space amid the trees, when, if you will direct your course towards a large beech-tree on

the opposite side, you will find another narrow path, which will take you where you desire to go."

"But I cannot go alone," cried Henry.

Mabel, however, slipped past him, and was out of sight in an instant.

Henry looked as if he meant to follow her, but Suffolk ventured to arrest him.

"Do not tarry here, longer, my gracious liege," said the duke. "Danger is to be apprehended, and the sooner you rejoin your attendants the better. Return with them, if you please, but do not expose yourself further now."

Henry yielded, though reluctantly, and they walked on in silence. Ere long, they arrived at the open space described by Mabel, and immediately perceived the large beech-tree, behind which they found the path.

By this time, the moon had arisen, and as they emerged upon the marsh, they easily discovered a track, though not broader than a sheep-walk, leading along its edge. As they hurried across it, Suffolk occasionally cast a furtive glance over his shoulder, but he saw nothing to alarm him. The whole tract of marshy land on the left was hidden from view by a silvery mist.

In a few minutes, the king and his companion gained firmer ground, and ascending the gentle elevation on the other side of the marsh, made their way to a little knoll crowned by a huge oak, which commanded a fine view of the lake, winding through the valley beyond. Henry, who was a few yards in advance of his companion, paused at a short distance from the tree, and being somewhat overheated, took off his cap to wipe his brow, laughingly observing,—"In good truth, Suffolk, we must henceforth be rated as miserable faineants, to be scared from our path by a silly wench's tale of deer-stealers and wild huntsmen. I am sorry I yielded to her entreaties. If Herne be still extant, he must be more than a century and a half

old, for unless the legend is false, he flourished in the time of my predecessor, Richard the Second. I would I could see him!"

"Behold him, then!" cried a harsh voice from behind.

Turning at the sound, Henry perceived a tall, dark figure, of hideous physiognomy and strange attire, helmed with a huge pair of antlers, standing between him and the oak tree. So sudden was the appearance of the figure, that, in spite of himself, the king slightly started.

"What art thou?—ha!" he demanded.

"What I have said," replied the demon. "I am Herne the hunter. Welcome to my domain, Harry of England. You are lord of the castle, but I am lord of the forest. Ha! ha!"

"I am lord both of the forest and the castle—yea, of all this broad land, false fiend!" cried the king, "and none shall dispute it with me. In the name of the most holy faith of which I am the defender, I command thee to avoid my path! Get thee backwards, Satan!"

The demon laughed derisively.

"Harry of England, advance towards me, and you advance upon your peril," he rejoined.

"Avaunt, I say!" cried the king. "In the name of the blessed Trinity, and of all holy angels and saints, I strike!"

And he whirled the staff round his head. But ere the weapon could descend, a flash of dazzling fire encircled the demon, amidst which he vanished.

"Heaven protect us!" exclaimed Henry, appalled.

At this juncture, the sound of a horn was heard, and a number of wild figures in fantastic garbs,—some mounted on swarthy steeds, and accompanied by hounds,—others on foot, issued from the adjoining covert, and hurried towards the spot occupied by the king.

"Aha!" exclaimed Henry—"more of the same sort.

Hell, it would seem, has let loose her hosts; but I have no fear of them. Stand by me, Suffolk."

"To the death, sire," replied the duke, drawing his sword.

By this time, one of the foremost of the impish crew had reached the king, and commanded him to yield himself prisoner.

"Dost know whom thou askest to yield, dog!" cried Henry, furiously.

"Yea," replied the other, "thou art the king!"

"Then down on thy knees, traitor!" roared Henry; "down all of ye, and sue for mercy."

"For mercy—ha! ha!" rejoined the other, "it is thy turn to sue for mercy, tyrant! We acknowledge no other ruler than Herne the hunter."

"Then seek him in hell!" cried Henry, dealing the speaker a tremendous blow on the head with his staff, which brought him senseless to the ground.

The others immediately closed round him, and endeavored to seize the king.

"Ha! dogs!—ha! traitors!" vociferated Henry, plying his staff with great activity, and bringing down an assailant at each stroke; "do you dare to lay hands upon our sacred person? Back! back!"

The determined resistance offered by the king, supported as he was by Suffolk, paralyzed his assailants, who seemed more bent upon securing his person than on doing him injury. But Suffolk's attention was presently diverted by the attack of a fierce black hound, set upon him by a stout fellow in a bearded mask. After a hard struggle, and not before he had been severely bitten in the arm, the duke contrived to despatch his assailant.

"This to avenge poor Bawsey!" cried the man who had set on the hound, stabbing at Suffolk with his knife.

But the duke parried the blow, and, disarming his

"Spare him, sire—spare him," cried Mabel, rushing forward. Page 159.

—*Windsor Castle.*

antagonist, forced him to the ground, and tearing off his mask, disclosed the features of Morgan Fenwolf.

Meanwhile, Henry had been placed in considerable jeopardy. Like Suffolk, he had slaughtered a hound, and, in aiming a blow at the villain who set it on, his foot slipped, and he lay at his mercy. The wretch raised his knife, and was in the act of striking, when a sword was passed through his body. The blow was decisive; the king instantly arose, and the rest of his assailants—horse as well as foot—disheartened by what had occurred, beat a hasty retreat. Harry turned to look for his deliverer and uttered an exclamation of astonishment and anger.

"Ah! God's death!" he cried, "can I believe my eyes? Is it you, Sir Thomas Wyat?"

"Ay," replied the other.

"What do you here? ha!" demanded the king. "You should be in Paris."

"I have tarried for revenge," replied Wyat.

"Revenge!—ha!" cried Henry. "On whom?"

"On you," replied Wyat.

"What!" vociferated Henry, foaming with rage—"Is it you, traitor, who have devised this damnable plot?—is it you who would make your king a captive?—you who slay him? Have you leagued yourself with fiends?"

But Wyat made no answer; and though he lowered the point of his sword, he regarded the king sternly.

A female figure now rushed forward, and bending before the king, cried, in an imploring voice,—

"Spare him, sire—spare him! He is no party to the attack. I was near him in yon wood, and he stirred not forth till he saw your life in danger. He then delivered you from the assassin."

"I did so, because I reserved him for my own hand," said Wyat.

"You hear him confess his treason," cried Henry;

"down on your knees, villain, or I will strike you to my feet."

"He has just saved your life, my liege," cried the supplicant. "Oh, spare him!"

"What makes you here, Mabel?" cried Henry, angrily.

"I followed your majesty unseen," she replied, in some confusion, "and reached yon wood just as the attack commenced. I did not dare to advance further."

"You should have gone home—gone home," rejoined the king. "Wyat," he continued, in a tone of stern reproach, "you were once a loyal subject. What means this change?"

"It means that you have robbed me of a mistress," replied Wyat; "and for this cause I have damned myself."

"Pardon him!—oh, pardon him, sire!" cried Mabel.

"I cannot understand you, Wyat," said Henry, after a pause; "but I have myself suffered from the pangs of jealousy. You have saved my life, and I will spare yours."

"Sire!" cried Wyat.

"Suffolk!" exclaimed Henry, looking towards the duke, who was holding Fenwolf by the throat, "shall I be justified in letting him go free?"

"Strike!—strike!" cried a deep voice in Wyat's ear; "your rival is now in your power."

"Far be it from me to thwart your majesty's generous impulses," rejoined Suffolk. "It is true that Wyat has saved your life; and if he had been disposed to take it, you have this moment exposed yourself to him."

"Sir Thomas Wyat," said the king, turning to him, "you have my full and free pardon. Quit this forest instantly, and make your way to Paris. If you are found within it to-morrow, you will be lodged in the Tower."

Wyat knelt down, and would have pressed Henry's hand to his lips; but the latter pushed him aside.

"No—no! Not now—on your return."

Thus rebuffed, Wyat strode away, and as he passed the tree, he heard a voice exclaim—

"You have escaped him, but think not to escape *me!*"

"And now, sweetheart," said Henry, turning to Mabel, "since you are so far on the way, you shall go with me to the castle."

"On no account, my liege," she returned; "my grandsire will wonder what has become of me. He must already be in great alarm."

"But I will send an attendant to quiet his fears," urged Henry.

"That would only serve to increase them," she rejoined. "Nay, I must go."

And breaking from him, she darted swiftly down the hill, and glanced across the marsh like a moonbeam.

"Plague on it!" cried Henry—"I have again forgotten to question her about her birth."

"Shall I despatch this knave, my liege?" cried Suffolk, pointing with his sword to Fenwolf.

"By no means," said the king; "something may be learnt from him. Hark thee, thou felon hound,—if thou indeed servest the fiend, thou seest he deserts thee, as he does all who put faith in him."

"I see it," replied Fenwolf, who, finding resistance vain, had folded his hands doggedly upon his breast.

"Then confess thy evil practises," said the king.

"Give me my life, and I will," replied Fenwolf. And as he uttered the words, he caught sight of the dark figure of Herne, stationed at the side of the oak, with its right arm raised menacingly.

"What seest thou?" cried Henry, remarking his fixed gaze towards the tree, and glancing in that direction.

Fenwolf made no reply.

Henry went up to the tree, and walked round it, but he could see nothing.

"I will scour the forest to-morrow," he muttered, "and hang every knave I find within it who cannot give a good account of himself."

"Ho! ho! ho!" laughed a voice, which seemed to proceed from the branches of the tree.

Henry looked up, but no one was visible.

"God's death!—derided!" he roared. "Man or devil, thou shalt feel my wrath."

"Ho! ho! ho!" again laughed the voice.

Stamping with rage, Henry swore a great oath, and smote the trunk of the tree with his sword.

"Your majesty will search in vain," said Suffolk; "it is clearly the fiend with whom you have to deal, and the aid of holy priests must be obtained to drive him from the forest."

"Ho! ho! ho!" again laughed the voice.

A party of horsemen now appeared in view. They proved to be the royal attendants, who had ridden forward in search of the king, and were instantly hailed by Henry and Suffolk. They were headed by Captain Bouchier, who at a sign from the king instantly dismounted.

"Give me your horse, Bouchier," said Henry, "and do you and half a dozen of your men remain on guard at this tree till I send a troop of arquebusiers to relieve you. When they arrive, station them near it, and let them remain here till I return in the morning. If any one appears, make him a prisoner."

"Your majesty's orders shall be faithfully obeyed," replied Bouchier.

Bound hand and foot, Fenwolf was thrown upon the

back of a horse, and guarded by two halberdiers, who were prepared to strike him dead on the slightest movement. In this way, he was conveyed to the castle, and placed in the guard-chamber of the lower gate, till further orders should be issued respecting him.

CHAPTER IX.

SHOWING HOW MORGAN FENWOLF ESCAPED FROM THE GARTER TOWER.

Half-an-hour afterwards, Fenwolf was visited by the Duke of Suffolk and a canon of the college; and the guard-chamber being cleared, the duke enjoined him to make clear his bosom by confession.

"I hold it my duty to tell you, prisoner," said Suffolk, "that there is no hope of your life. The king's highness is determined to make a fearful example of you and all your companions in crime; but he does not seek to destroy your soul, and has therefore sent this holy man to you, with the desire that you may open your heart to him, and by confession and repentance save yourself from eternal perdition."

"Confession will profit me nothing," said Fenwolf, moodily. "I cannot pray if I would."

"You cannot be so utterly lost, my son," rejoined the canon. "Hell may have woven her dark chains round you, but not so firmly but that the hand of Heaven can burst them."

"You waste time is seeking to persuade me," returned Fenwolf.

"You are not ignorant of the punishment inflicted upon those condemned for sorcery, my son?" demanded the canon.

"It is the stake, is it not?" replied Fenwolf.

"Ay," replied the canon; "but even that fiery trial will fail to purge out your offenses without penitence. My lord of Suffolk, this wretched man's condition de-

mands special attention. It will profit the church much to win his soul from the fiend. Let him, I pray you, be removed to the dungeon beneath the Garter Tower, where a priest shall visit him, and pray by his side till day-break."

"It will be useless, father," said Fenwolf.

"I do not despair, my son," replied the canon; "and when I see you again in the morning, I trust to find you in a better frame of mind."

The duke then gave directions to the guard to remove the prisoner; and after some further conference with the canon, returned to the royal apartments.

Meanwhile, the canon shaped his course towards the Horse-shoe cloisters,—a range of buildings so designated from their form, and situated at the west-end of St. George's chapel, and he had scarcely entered them, when he heard footsteps behind him, and turning at the sound, beheld a Franciscan friar, for so his habit of the coarsest gray cloth, tied with a cord round the waist, proclaimed him. The friar was very tall and gaunt, and his cowl was drawn over his face so as to conceal his features.

"What would you, brother?" inquired the canon, halting.

"I have a request to make of you, reverend sir," replied the friar, with a lowly inclination of the head. "I have just arrived from Chertsey Abbey, whither I have been tarrying for the last three days, and while conversing with the guard at the gate, I saw a prisoner brought into the castle, charged with heinous offenses, and amongst others, with dealings with the fiend."

"You have been rightly informed, brother," rejoined the canon.

"And have I, also, been rightly informed that you desire a priest to pass the night with him, reverend sir?" returned the friar. "If so, I would crave permission to

undertake the office. Two souls, as deeply laden as that of this poor wretch, have been snatched from the jaws of Satan by my efforts, and I do not despair of success now."

"Since you are so confident, brother," said the canon, "I commit him readily to your hands. I was about to seek other aid, but your offer comes opportunely. With Heaven's help, I doubt not you will achieve a victory over the evil one."

As the latter words were uttered, a sudden pain seemed to seize the friar. Staggering slightly, he caught at the railing of the cloisters for support, but he instantly recovered himself.

"It is nothing, reverend sir," he said, seeing that the good canon regarded him anxiously. "Long vigils and fasting have made me liable to frequent attacks of giddiness, but they pass as quickly as they come. Will it please you to go with me, and direct the guard to admit me to the prisoner?"

The canon assented; and crossing the quadrangle, they returned to the gateway.

Meanwhile, the prisoner had been removed to the lower chamber of the Garter Tower. This fortification one of the oldest in the Castle, being coeval with the Curfew Tower, is now in a state of grievous neglect and ruin. Unroofed, unfloored, filled with rubbish, masked by the yard walls of the adjoining habitations, with one side entirely pulled down, and a great breach in front, it is solely owing to the solid and rock-like construction of its masonry, that it is indebted for partial preservation. Still, notwithstanding its dilapidated condition, and that it is the mere shell of its former self, its appearance is highly picturesque. The walls are of prodigious thickness, and the deep embrasures within them are almost perfect; while a secret staircase may still be tracked partly round

the building. Amid the rubbish choking up its lower chamber, grows a young tree, green and flourishing—a type, it is to be hoped, of the restoration of the structure!

Conducted to a low vaulted chamber in this tower, the prisoner was cast upon its floor—for he was still bound hand and foot—and left alone and in darkness. But he was not destined to continue in this state long. The door of the dungeon opened, and the guard ushered in the tall Franciscan friar.

"What ho! dog of a prisoner," he cried, "here is a holy man come to pass the night with you in prayer.

"He may take his Ave Maries and Paternosters elsewhere—I want them not," replied Fenwolf, moodily.

"You would prefer my bringing Herne the hunter, no doubt," rejoined the guard, laughing at his own jest; "but this is a physician for your soul. The saints help you in your good work, father. You will have no easy task."

"Set down the light, my son," cried the friar, harshly, "and leave us. My task will be easily accomplished."

Placing the lamp on the stone floor of the dungeon, the guard withdrew, and locked the door after him.

"Do you repent, my son?" demanded the friar, as soon as they were alone.

"Certes, I repent having put faith in a treacherous fiend who has deserted me,—but that is all," replied Fenwolf, with his face turned to the ground.

"Will you put faith in me if I promise you deliverance?" demanded the friar.

"You promise more than you can perform, as most of your brethren do," rejoined the other.

"You will not say so if you look up," said the friar.

Fenwolf started at the words, which were pronounced in a different voice from that previously adopted by the

speaker, and raised himself as far as his bonds would permit him. The friar had thrown back his cowl, and disclosed features of appalling hideousness, lighted up by a diabolical grin.

"You here!" cried Fenwolf.

"You doubted me," rejoined Herne; "but I never desert a follower. Besides, I wish to show the royal Harry that my power is equal to his own."

"But how are we to get out of this dungeon?" asked Fenwolf, gazing round apprehensively.

"My way out will be easy enough," replied Herne; "but your escape is attended with more difficulty. You remember how we went to the vaulted chamber, in the Curfew Tower, on the night when Mark Fytton, the butcher, was confined within it."

"I do," replied Fenwolf. "But I can think of nothing while I am tied thus."

Herne instantly drew forth a hunting-knife, and cutting Fenwolf's bonds asunder, the latter started to his feet.

"If that bull-headed butcher would have joined me I would have liberated him, as I am about to liberate you," pursued Herne. "But to return to the matter in hand. You recollect the secret passage we then tracked? There is such another staircase in this tower."

And, stepping to the further side of the chamber, he touched a small knob in the wall, and a stone flew back, disclosing an aperture just large enough to allow a man to pass through it.

"There is your road to freedom," he said, pointing to the hole; "creep along that narrow passage, and it will bring you to a small loophole in the wall, not many feet from the ground. The loophole is guarded by a bar of iron, but it is moved by a spring in the upper part of the stone in which it appears to be mortised. This impediment removed, you will easily force your way through

the loophole. Drop cautiously, for fear of the sentinels on the walls; then make your way to the forest, and if you 'scape the arquebusiers who are scouring it, conceal yourself in the sandstone cave below the beech-tree."

"And what of you?" asked Fenwolf.

"I have more to do here," replied Herne, impatiently—"away!"

Thus dismissed, Fenwolf entered the aperture, which was instantly closed after him by Herne. Carefully following the instructions of his leader, the keeper passed through the loophole, let himself drop softly down, and keeping close to the walls of the tower till he heard the sentinels move off, darted swiftly across the street and made good his escape.

Meanwhile, Herne drew the cowl over his head, and stepping to the door, knocked loudly against it.

"What would you, father?" cried the guard, from without.

"Enter, my son, and you shall know," replied Herne.

The next moment, the door was unlocked and the guard advanced into the dungeon.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, snatching up the lamp and looking round—"where is the prisoner?"

"Gone," replied Herne.

"What! has the fiend flown away with him?" cried the man, in mixed astonishment and alarm.

"He has been set free by Herne the hunter!" cried the demon. "Tell all who question thee so, and relate what thou now seest."

At the words, a bright blue flame illumined the chamber, in the midst of which was seen the tall dark figure of Herne. His Franciscan's gown had dropped to his feet, and he appeared habited in his wild deerskin garb. With a loud cry, the guard fell senseless on the ground.

A few minutes after this, as was subsequently ascer-

tained, a tall Franciscan friar threaded the cloisters behind Saint George's Chapel, and giving the word to the sentinels, passed through the outer door communicating with the steep descent leading to the town.

CHAPTER X.

HOW HERNE THE HUNTER WAS HIMSELF HUNTED.

On the guard's recovery, information of what had occurred was immediately conveyed to the king, who had not yet retired to rest, but was sitting in his private chamber with the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk. The intelligence threw him into a great fury; he buffeted the guard, and ordered him to be locked up in the dungeon whence the prisoner had escaped; reprimanded the canon; directed the Duke of Suffolk, with a patrol, to make search in the neighborhood of the castle for the fugitive and the friar; and bade the Duke of Norfolk get together a band of arquebusiers; and as soon as the latter were assembled, he put himself at their head, and again rode into the forest.

The cavalcade had proceeded about a mile along the great avenue, when one of the arquebusiers rode up and said that he heard some distant sounds on the right. Commanding a halt, Henry listened for a moment, and, satisfied that the man was right, quitted the course he was pursuing, and dashed across the broad glade now traversed by the avenue called Queen Anne's Ride. As he advanced, the rapid trampling of horses was heard, accompanied by shouts, and presently afterwards, a troop of wild-looking horsemen in fantastic garbs was seen galloping down the hill, pursued by Bouchier and his followers. The king immediately shaped his course so as to intercept the flying party, and being in some measure screened by the trees, he burst unexpectedly upon them at a turn of the road.

Henry called to the fugitives to surrender, but they

refused, and brandishing their long knives and spears, made a desperate resistance. But they were speedily surrounded and overpowered. Bouchier inquired from the king what should be done with the prisoners.

"Hang them all upon yon trees!" cried Henry, pointing to two sister oaks which stood near the scene of strife.

The terrible sentence was immediately carried into execution. Cords were produced, and in less than half an hour twenty breathless bodies were swinging from the branches of the two trees indicated by the king.

"This will serve to deter others from like offenses," observed Henry, who had watched the whole proceedings with savage satisfaction. "And now, Bouchier, how came you to let the leader of these villains escape?"

"I did not know he had escaped, my liege," replied Bouchier, in astonishment.

"Yea, marry, but he has escaped," rejoined Henry; "and he has had the audacity to show himself in the castle within this hour, and the cunning, moreover, to set the prisoner free."

And he proceeded to relate what had occurred.

"This is strange, indeed, my liege," replied Bouchier, at the close of the king's recital; "and to my thinking is proof convincing that we have to do with a supernatural being."

"Supernatural!—pshaw—banish the idle notion," rejoined Henry, sternly. "We are all the dupes of some jugglery. The caitiff will doubtless return to the forest. Continue your search, therefore, for him throughout the night. If you catch him, I promise you a royal reward."

So saying, he rode back to the castle, somewhat appeased by the wholesale vengeance he had taken upon the offenders.

In obedience to the orders he had received, Bouchier with his followers continued riding about the forest, dur-

ing the whole night, but without finding anything to reward his search until about dawn it occurred to him to return to the trees on which the bodies were suspended. As he approached them, he fancied he beheld a horse standing beneath the nearest tree, and immediately ordered his followers to proceed as noiselessly as possible, and to keep under the cover of the wood. A nearer advance convinced him that his eyes had not deceived him. It was a swart, wild-looking horse that he beheld, with eyes that flamed like carbuncles, while a couple of bodies, evidently snatched from the branches, were laid across its back. A glance at the trees, too, showed Bouchier that they had been considerably lightened of their hideous spoil.

Seeing this, Bouchier dashed forward. Alarmed by the noise, the wild horse neighed loudly, and a dark figure instantly dropped from the tree upon its back, and proceeded to disencumber it of its load. But before this could be accomplished, a bolt from a crossbow, shot by one of Bouchier's followers, pierced the animal's brain. Rearing aloft, it fell backwards, in such manner as would have crushed an ordinary rider, but Herne slipped off uninjured, and with incredible swiftness darted among the trees. The others started in pursuit, and a chase commenced, in which the demon huntsman had to sustain the part of the deer—nor could any deer have afforded better sport.

Away flew the pursued and pursuers over broad glade and through tangled glen—the woods resounding with their cries. Bouchier did not lose sight of the fugitive for a moment, and urged his men to push on ; but despite his alternate proffers and menaces, they gained but little on Herne, who, speeding towards the Home Park, cleared its high palings with a single bound.

Over went Bouchier and his followers, and they then descried him making his way to a large oak, standing

almost alone in the center of a wide glade. An instant afterwards, he reached the tree, shook his arm menacingly at his pursuers, and vanished.

The next moment, Bouchier came up; flung himself from his panting steed, and, with his drawn sword in hand, forced himself through a rift in its side, into the tree. There was a hollow within it large enough to allow a man to stand upright, and two funnel-like holes ran upwards into the branches. Finding nothing, Bouchier called for a hunting spear, and thrust it as far as he could into the holes above. The point encountered no obstruction expect such as was offered by the wood itself. He stamped upon the ground—and sounded it on all sides with the spear, but with no better success.

Issuing forth, he next directed his attention to the upper part of the tree, which, while he was occupied inside, had been carefully watched by his followers; and not content with viewing it from below, he clambered into the branches. But they had nothing to show, except their own leafy covering.

The careful examination of the ground about the tree at length led to the discovery of a small hole among its roots, about half a dozen yards from the trunk, and though this hole seemed scarcely large enough to serve for an entrance to the burrow of a fox, Bouchier deemed it expedient to keep a careful watch over it.

His investigation completed, he despatched a sergeant of the guard to the castle, to acquaint the king with what had occurred.

Disturbed by the events of the night, Henry obtained little sleep, and at an early hour, summoned an attendant, and demanded whether there were any tidings from the forest. The attendant replied that a sergeant of the guard was without, sent by Captain Bouchier, with a message for his majesty. The sergeant was immediately admitted to

"Set fire to the accursed piece of timber," roared the King. "Burn it to the dust and scatter it to the wind." Page 175.

—*Windsor Castle.*

the royal presence, and on the close of his marvelous story, the king, who had worked himself into a tremendous fury during its relation, roared out—

"What! foiled again—ha! But he shall not escape, if I have to root up half the trees in the forest. Bouchier and his fellows must be bewitched. Harkye, knaves, get together a dozen of the best woodmen and yeomen in the castle—instantly, as you value your lives—bid them bring axe and saw, pick and spade. D'ye mark me—ha! Stay, I have not done. I must have fagots and straw, for I will burn this tree to the ground,—burn it to a char. Summon the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk—the rascal archer I dubbed the Duke of Shoreditch, and his mates—the keepers of the forest and their hounds—summon them quickly, and bid a band of the yeomen of the guard get ready." And he sprang from his couch.

The king's commands were executed with such alacrity, that by the time he was fully attired, the whole of the persons he had ordered to be summoned were assembled. Putting himself at their head, he rode forth to the Home Park, and found Bouchier and his followers grouped around the tree.

"We are still at fault, my liege," said Bouchier.

"So I see, sir," replied the king, angrily. "Hew down the tree instantly, knaves," he added to the woodmen. "Fall to,—fall to."

Ropes were then fastened to the head of the tree, and the welkin resounded with the rapid strokes of the hatchets. It was a task of some difficulty, but such zeal and energy were displayed by the woodmen, that, ere long, the giant trunk lay prostrate on the ground. Its hollows were now fully exposed to view, but they were empty.

"Set fire to the accursed piece of timber!" roared the king—"burn it to dust, and scatter it to the wind."

At these orders, two yeomen of the guard advanced, and, throwing down a heap of fagots, straw, and other combustibles, on the roots of the tree, soon kindled a fierce fire.

Meanwhile, a couple of woodmen, stripped of their jerkins, and with their brawny arms bared to the shoulder, mounted on the trunk, and strove to split it asunder. Some of the keepers likewise got into the branches, and peered into every crack and crevice, in the hope of making some discovery. Amongst the latter was Will Sommers, who had posted himself near a great arm of the tree, which he maintained, when lopped off, would be found to contain the demon.

Nor were other expedients neglected. A fierce hound had been sent into the hole near the roots of the tree, by Gabriel Lapp, but after a short absence here turned howling and terrified; nor could all the efforts of Gabriel, seconded by a severe scourging with his heavy dog-whip, induce him to enter it again.

When the hound had come forth, a couple of yeomen advanced to enlarge the opening, while a third with a pick endeavored to remove the root, which formed an impediment to their efforts.

"They may dig, but they'll never catch him," observed Shoreditch, who stood by, to his companions. "Hunting a spirit is not the same thing as training and raising a wolf, or earthing and digging out a badger."

"Not so loud, duke," said Islington, "his majesty may think thy jest irreverent."

"I have an arrow blessed by a priest," said Paddington, "which I shall let fly at the spirit, if he appears."

"Here he is! here he is!" cried Will Sommers, as a great white horned owl, which had been concealed in some part of the tree, flew forth.

"It may be the demon in that form—shoot!—shoot!" cried Shoreditch.

Paddington bent his bow. The arrow whistled through the air, and in another moment the owl fell fluttering to the ground completely transfixed; but it underwent no change, as was expected by the credulous archer.

Meanwhile, the fire, being kept constantly supplied with fresh fagots, and stirred by the yeomen of the guard, burnt bravely. The lower part of the tree was already consumed, and the flames, roaring through the hollow within, with a sound like that of a furnace, promised soon to reduce it to charcoal.

The mouth of the hole having now been widened, another keeper, who had brought forward a couple of lurchers, sent them into it; but in a few moments they returned, as the hound had done, howling, and with scared looks. Without heeding their enraged master, they ran off with their tails between their legs, towards the castle.

"I see how it is, Rufus," said Gabriel, patting his hound, who looked wistfully and half-reproachfully at him. "Thou wert not to blame, poor fellow! The best dog that ever was whelped cannot be expected to face the devil."

Though long ere this it had become the general opinion that it was useless to persevere further in the search, the king, with his characteristic obstinacy, would not give it up. In due time, the whole of the trunk of the enormous tree was consumed, and its branches cast into the fire. The roots were rent from the ground, and a wide and deep trench digged around the spot. The course of the hole was traced for some distance, but it was never of any size, and was suddenly lost by the falling in of the earth.

At length, after five hours' watching, Henry's patience

was exhausted, and he ordered the pit to be filled up, and every crevice and fissure in the ground about, to be carefully stopped.

"If we cannot unkennel the fox," he said, "we will at least earth him up."

"For all your care, gossip Henry," muttered Will Sommers, as he rode after his royal master to the castle, "the fox will work his way out."

Thus ends the Second Book of the Chronicle of Windsor Castle.

Book the Third.

CARDINAL WOLSEY.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN HENRY AND CATHERINE OF ARAGON IN THE URSWICK CHAPEL; AND HOW IT WAS INTERRUPTED.

It was now the joyous month of June; and where is June so joyous as within the courts and halls of peerless Windsor? Where does the summer sun shine so brightly as upon its stately gardens and broad terraces, its matchless parks, its silver belting river, and its circumference of proud and regal towers? Nowhere in the world. At all seasons, Windsor is magnificent; whether, in winter, she looks upon her garniture of woods stripped of their foliage—her river covered with ice—or the wide expanse of country around her, sheeted with snow—or, in autumn, gazes on the same scene—a world of golden-tinted leaves, brown meadows, or glowing corn-fields. But summer is her season of beauty—June is the month when her woods are fullest and greenest; when her groves are shadiest; her avenues most delicious; when her river sparkles like a diamond zone; when town and village, mansion and cot, church and tower, hill and vale, the distant capital itself—all within view—are seen to the highest advantage. At such a season, it is impossible to behold from afar the heights of Windsor, crowned, like the Phrygian goddess, by a castled diadem, and backed by lordly woods, and withhold a burst of enthusiasm and delight. And it is equally impossible, at such a season, to stand on the grand northern terrace and gaze first at the proud pile enshrining the sovereign mistress of the

land, and then gaze on the unequaled prospect spread out before it, embracing in its wide range every kind of beauty that the country can boast, and not be struck with the thought that the perfect and majestic castle—

> In state as wholesome as in state 'tis fit,
> Worthy the owner, and the owner it,—

together with the wide, and smiling, and populous district around it, form an apt representation of the British sovereign and her dominions. There stands the castle, dating back as far as the Conquest, and boasting since its foundation a succession of royal inmates, while at its foot lies a region of unequaled fertility and beauty—full of happy homes and loving, loyal hearts—a miniature of the whole country and its inhabitants. What though the smiling landscape may be darkened by a passing cloud! —what though a momentary gloom may gather round the august brow of the proud pile!—the cloud will speedily vanish—the gloom disperse—and the bright and sunny scene look yet brighter and sunnier from the contrast.

It was the chance of the writer of these lines upon one occasion to behold his sovereign under circumstances which he esteems singularly fortunate. She was taking rapid exercise with the prince upon the south side of the garden-terrace. All at once, the royal pair paused at the summit of the ascent leading from George the Fourth's gateway. The prince disappeared along the eastern terrace, leaving the queen alone. And there she stood, her slight, faultless figure sharply defined against the clear sky. Nothing was wanting to complete the picture; the great bay windows of the Victoria Tower, on the one hand—the balustrade of the terrace, on the other—the Home Park beyond. It was thrilling to feel that that small, solitary figure comprehended all the might and

majesty of England—and a thousand kindling aspirations were awakened by the thought.

But it was, as has been said, the merry month of June and Windsor Castle looked down in all its magnificence upon the pomp of woods, and upon the twelve fair and smiling counties lying within its ken. A joyous stir was within its courts—the gleam of arms and the fluttering of banners was seen upon its battlements and towers, and the ringing of bells, the beating of drums, and the fanfares of trumpets, mingled with the shouting of crowds and the discharge of ordnance.

Amidst this tumult, a grave procession issued from the deanery, and took its way across the lower quadrangle, which was thronged with officers and men-at-arms, in the direction of the lower gate. Just as it arrived there, a distant gun was heard, and an answering peal was instantly fired from the culverins of the Curfew Tower, while a broad standard, emblazoned with the arms of France and England within the garter, and having for supporters the English lion, crowned, and the red dragon, sinister, was reared upon the keep. All these preparations betokened the approach of the king, who was returning to the castle, after six weeks' absence.

Though information of the king's visit to the castle had only preceded him by a few hours, everything was ready for his reception—and the greatest exertions were used to give splendor to it.

In spite of his stubborn and tyrannical nature, Henry was a popular monarch, and never showed himself before his subjects but he gained their applauses; his love of pomp, his handsome person, and manly deportment, always winning him homage from the multitude. But at no period was he in a more critical position than the present. The meditated divorce from Catherine of Aragon was a step which found no sympathy from the better

portion of his subjects, while the ill-assorted union of Anne Boleyn, an avowed Lutheran, which it was known would follow it, was equally objectionable. The seeds of discontent had been widely sown in the capital; and tumults had occurred which though promptly checked, had nevertheless alarmed the king, coupled as they were with the disapprobation of his ministers, the sneering remonstrances of France, the menaces of the Papal see, and the open hostilities of Spain. But the characteristic obstinacy of his nature kept him firm to his point, and he resolved to carry it, be the consequences what they might.

All his efforts to win over Campeggio proved fruitless. The legate was deaf to his menaces or promises, well knowing that to aid Anne Boleyn would be to seriously affect the interests of the Church of Rome.

The affair, however, so long and so artfully delayed, was now drawing to a close. A court was appointed by the legates to be holden on the 18th of June, at Blackfriars, to try the question. Gardiner had been recalled from Rome to act as counsel for Henry; and the monarch, determining to appear by proxy at the trial, left his palace of Bridewell the day before it was to come on, and set out with Anne Boleyn and his chief attendants for Windsor Castle.

Whatever secret feelings might be entertained against him, Henry was received by the inhabitants of Windsor with every demonstration of loyalty and affection. Deafening shouts rent the air as he approached; blessings and good wishes were showered upon him; and hundred of caps were flung into the air. But noticing that Anne Boleyn was received with evil looks and in stern silence, and construing this into an affront to himself, Henry not only made slight and haughty acknowledgment of the welcome given him, but looked out for some pretext to manifest his displeasure. Luckily none

was afforded him, and he entered the castle in a sullen mood.

The day was spent in gentle exercise within the Home Park and on the terrace, and the king affected the utmost gaiety and indifference; but those acquainted with him could readily perceive he was ill at ease. In the evening, he remained for some time alone in his closet penning despatches, and then summoning an attendant, ordered him to bring Captain Bouchier into his presence.

"Well, Bouchier," he said, as the officer made his appearance, "have you obeyed my instructions in regard to Mabel Lyndwood?"

"I have, my liege," replied Bouchier. "In obedience to your majesty's commands, immediately after your arrival at the castle, I rode to the forester's hut, and ascertained that the damsel was still there."

"And looking as beautiful as ever, I'll be sworn!" said the king.

"It was the first time I had seen her, my liege," replied Bouchier; "but I do not think she could have ever looked more beautiful."

"I am well assured of it," replied Henry. "The pressure of affairs during my absence from the castle had banished her image from my mind; but now it returns as forcibly as before. And you have so arranged it that she will be brought hither to-morrow night?"

Bouchier replied in the affirmative.

"It is well," pursued Henry; "but what more?—for you look as if you had something further to declare."

"Your majesty will not have forgotten how you exterminated the band of Herne the hunter?" said Bouchier.

"Mother of Heaven, no!" cried the king, starting up—"I have not forgotten it. What of them?—ha! have they come to life again?—do they scour the parks once more?—That were indeed a marvel!"

"What I have to relate is almost as great a marvel," returned Bouchier. "I have not heard of the resurrection of the band, though for aught I know it may have occurred. But Herne has been seen again in the forest. Several of the keepers have been scared by him—travelers have been affrighted and plundered—and no one will now cross the Great Park after nightfall."

"Amazement!" cried Henry, again seating himself; "once let the divorce be settled, and I will effectually check the career of this lawless and mysterious being."

"Pray Heaven your majesty may be able to do so!" replied Bouchier. "But I have always been of opinion that the only way to get rid of the demon would be by the aid of the church. He is unassailable by mortal weapons."

"It would almost seem so," said the king. "And yet I do not like to yield to the notion."

"I shrewdly suspect that old Tristram Lyndwood, the grandsire of the damsel upon whom your majesty has deigned to cast your regards, is in some way or other leagued with Herne," said Bouchier. "At all events, I saw him with a tall, hideous-looking personage, whose name I understood to be Valentine Hagthorne, and who, I feel persuaded, must be one of the remnants of the demon-hunter's band."

"Why did you not arrest him?" inquired Henry.

"I did not like to do so without your majesty's authority," replied Bouchier. "Besides, I could scarcely arrest Hagthorne without at the same time securing the old forester, which might have alarmed the damsel. But I am ready to execute your injunctions now."

"Let a party of men go in search of Hagthorne to-night," replied Henry; "and while Mabel is brought to the castle to-morrow, do you arrest old Tristram, and keep him in custody till I have leisure to examine him."

"It shall be done as you desire, my liege," replied Bouchier, bowing and departing.

Shortly after this, Henry, accompanied by Anne Boleyn, proceeded with his attendants to Saint George's Chapel, and heard vespers performed. Just as he was about to return, an usher advanced towards him, and making a profound reverence, said that a masked dame, whose habiliments proclaimed her of the highest rank, craved a moment's audience of him.

"Where is she?" demanded Henry.

"In the north aisle, an' please your majesty," replied the usher, "near the Urswick chapel. I told her that this was not the place for an audience of your majesty, nor the time; but she would not be said nay, and therefore, at the risk of incurring your sovereign displeasure, I have ventured to proffer her request."

The usher omitted to state that his chief inducement to incur the risk was a valuable ring given him by the lady.

"Well, I will go to her," said the king. "I pray you, excuse me for a short space, fair mistress," he added, to Anne Boleyn.

And quitting the choir, he entered the northern aisle, and casting his eyes down the line of noble columns by which it is flanked, and seeing no one, he concluded that the lady must have retired into the Urswick chapel. And so it proved; for on reaching this exquisite little shrine, he perceived a tall, masked dame within it, clad in robes of the richest black velvet. As he entered the chapel, the lady advanced towards him, and throwing herself on her knees, removed her mask—disclosing features stamped with sorrow and suffering, but still retaining an expression of the greatest dignity. They were those of Catherine of Aragon.

Uttering an angry exclamation, Henry turned on his

heel, and would have left her, but she clung to the skirts of his robe.

"Hear me a moment, Henry—my king—my husband—one single moment—hear me!" cried Catherine, in tones of such passionate anguish, that he could not resist the appeal.

"Be brief, then, Kate," he rejoined, taking her hand to raise her.

"Blessings on you for the word!" cried the queen, covering his hand with kisses. "I am indeed your own true Kate—your faithful, loving, lawful wife!"

"Rise, madam!" cried Henry, coldly—"this posture beseems not Catherine of Aragon."

"I obey you now as I have ever done," she replied, rising; "though if I followed the prompting of my heart, I should not quit my knees till I had gained my suit."

"You have done wrong in coming here, Catherine, at this juncture," said Henry, "and may compel me to some harsh measure which I would willingly have avoided."

"No one knows I am here," replied the queen, "except two faithful attendants, who are vowed to secrecy; and I shall depart as I came."

"I am glad you have taken these precautions," replied Henry. "Now speak freely, but again I must bid you be brief."

"I will be as brief as I can," replied the queen; "but I pray you bear with me, Henry, if I unhappily weary you. I am full of misery and affliction, and never was daughter and wife of king wretched as I am. Pity me, Henry—pity me! But that I restrain myself, I should pour forth my soul in tears before you. Oh, Henry, after twenty years' duty and love, to be brought to this unspeakable shame—to be cast from you with dishonor—to be supplanted by another—it is terrible!"

"If you have only come here to utter reproaches,

madam, I must put an end to the interview," said Henry, frowning.

"I do not reproach you, Henry," replied Catherine, meekly—"I only wish to show you the depth and extent of my affection. I only implore you to do me right and justice—not to bring shame upon me to cover your own wrongful action. Have compassion upon the princess, our daughter—spare her, if you will not spare me!"

"You sue in vain, Catherine," replied Henry. "I lament your condition, but my eyes are fully opened to the sinful state in which I have so long lived, and I am resolved to abandon it."

"An unworthy prevarication," replied Catherine, "by which you seek to work my ruin, and accomplish your union with Anne Boleyn. And you will no doubt succeed; for what can I, a feeble woman, and a stranger in your country, do to prevent it. You will succeed, I say—you will divorce me, and place her upon the throne. But mark my words, Henry, she will not long remain there."

The king smiled bitterly.

"She will bring dishonor upon you," pursued Catherine. "The woman who has no regard for ties so sacred as those which bind us, will not respect other obligations."

"No more of this!" cried Henry. "You suffer your resentment to carry you too far."

"Too far!" exclaimed Catherine. "Too far!—Is to warn you that you are about to take a wanton to your bed—and that you will bitterly repent your folly, when too late, going too far? It is my duty, Henry, no less than my desire, thus to warn you ere the irrevocable step be taken."

"Have you said all you wish to say, madam?" demanded the king.

"No, my dear liege, not a hundredth part of what my heart prompts me to utter," replied Catherine. "I con-

jure you, by my strong and tried affection—by the tenderness that has for years subsisted between us—by your hopes of temporal prosperity and spiritual welfare—by all you hold dear and sacred—to pause while there is yet time. Let the legates meet to-morrow—let them pronounce sentence against me—and as surely as those fatal words are uttered, my heart will break."

"Tut, tut!"—exclaimed Henry, impatiently—"you will live many years in happy retirement."

"I will die as I have lived—a queen," replied Catherine; "but my life will not be long. Now answer me truly—if Anne Boleyn plays you false——"

"She never will play me false!" interrupted Henry.

"I say, *if* she does," pursued Catherine, "and you are satisfied of her guilt, will you be content with divorcing her as you divorce me?"

"No, by my father's head!" cried Henry, fiercely. "If such a thing were to happen, which I hold impossible, she should expiate her offense on the scaffold."

"Give me your hand on that," said Catherine.

"I give you my hand upon it," he replied.

"Enough," said the queen—"if I cannot have right and justice, I shall at least have vengeance, though it will come when I am in my tomb. But it *will* come, and that is sufficient."

"This is the frenzy of jealousy, Catherine," said Henry.

"No, Henry; it is not jealousy replied the queen, with dignity. "The daughter of Ferdinand of Spain and Isabella of Castile, with the best blood of Europe in her veins, would despise herself if she could entertain so paltry a feeling towards one born so much beneath her as Anne Boleyn.

"As you will, madam," rejoined Henry. "It is time our interview terminated."

"Not yet, Henry—for the love of Heaven, not yet!" implored Catherine. "Oh. bethink you by whom we

were joined together!—by your father, Henry the Seventh—one of the wisest princes that ever sat upon a throne; and by the sanction of my own father, Ferdinand the Fifth, one of the justest. Would they have sanctioned the match if it had been unlawful? Were they destitute of good counselors? Were they indifferent to the future?"

"You had better reserve these arguments for the legates' ears to-morrow, madam," said Henry, sternly.

"I shall urge them there with all the force I can," replied Catherine, "for I will leave nought untried to hinder an event so fraught with misery. But I feel the struggle will be hopeless."

"Then why make it?" rejoined Henry.

"Because it is due to you—to myself—to the princess our daughter—to our illustrious progenitors—and to our people, to make it," replied Catherine. "I should be unworthy to be your consort if I acted otherwise—and I will never, in thought, word, or deed, do aught derogatory to that title. You may divorce me, but I will never assent to it; you may wed Anne Boleyn, but she will never be your lawful spouse; and you may cast me from your palace, but I will never go willingly."

"I know you to be contumacious, madam," replied Henry. "And now, I pray you, resume your mask, and withdraw. What I have said will convince you that your stay is useless."

"I perceive it," replied Catherine. "Farewell, Henry—farewell, loved husband of my heart—farewell, forever!"

"Your mask—your mask, madam!" cried Henry, impatiently. "God's death! footsteps are approaching. Let no one enter here!" he cried, aioud.

"I *will* come in," cried Anne Boleyn, stepping into the chapel, just as Catherine had replaced her mask. "Ah!

your majesty looks confused. I fear I have interrupted some amorous conference."

"Come with me, Anne," said Henry, taking her arm, and trying to draw her away—"come with me."

"Not till I learn who your lady-love is," replied Anne, pettishly. "You affect to be jealous of me, my liege, but I have much more reason to be jealous of you. When you were last at Windsor, I heard you paid a secret visit to a fair maiden near the lake in the park, and now you are holding an interview with a masked dame here. Nay, I care not for your gestures of silence. I will speak."

"You are distraught, sweetheart," cried the king. "Come away."

"No," replied Anne. "Let this dame be dismissed."

"I shall not go at your bidding, minion!" cried Catherine, fiercely.

"Ah!" cried Anne, starting; "whom have we here?"

"One you had better have avoided," whispered Henry.

"The queen!" exclaimed Anne, with a look of dismay.

"Ay, the queen!" echoed Catherine, unmasking. "Henry, if you have any respect left for me, I pray you, order this woman from my presence. Let me depart in peace."

"Lady Anne, pray you retire," said Henry.

But Anne stood her ground resolutely.

"Nay, let her stay, then," said the queen; "and I promise you she shall repent her rashness. And do you stay too, Henry, and regard well her whom you are about to make your spouse. Question your sister Mary, somewhile consort to Louis the Twelfth and now Duchess of Suffolk,—question her as to the character and conduct of Anne Boleyn when she was her attendant at the court of France—ask whether she had never to reprove her for levity—question the Lord Percy as to her love for him—question Sir Thomas Wyat, and a host of others."

"All these charges are false and calumnious," cried Anne Boleyn.

"Let the king inquire and judge for himself," rejoined Catherine, "and if he weds you, let him look well to you, or you will make him a scoff to all honorable men. And now, as you have come between him and me—as you have divided husband and wife—for the intent, whether successful or not, I denounce you before Heaven, and invoke its wrath upon your head. Night and day, I will pray that you may be brought to shame; and when I shall be called hence, as I may be soon, I will appear before the throne of the Most High, and summon you to judgment."

"Take me from her, Henry," cried Anne, faintly; "her violence affrights me."

"No, you shall stay," said Catherine, grasping her arm, and detaining her, "you shall hear your doom. You imagine your career will be a brilliant one, and that you will be able to wield the scepter you wrongfully wrest from me, but it will molder into dust in your hand—the crown unjustly placed upon your brow will fall to the ground, and it will bring the head with it."

"Take me away, Henry, I implore you!" cried Anne.

"You *shall* hear me out," pursued Catherine, exerting all her strength, and maintaining her grasp—"or I will follow you down yon aisles, and pour forth my malediction against you in the hearing of all your attendants. You have braved me, and shall feel my power. Look at her, Henry—see how she shrinks before the gaze of an injured woman. Look me in the face, minion—you cannot!—you dare not!"

"Oh, Henry!" sobbed Anne.

"You have brought it upon yourself," said the king.

"She has," replied Catherine; "and unless she pauses and repents, she will bring yet more upon her head. You

suffer now, minion, but how will you feel when, in your turn, you are despised, neglected, and supplanted by a rival—when the false glitter of your charms having passed away, Henry will see only your faults—and will open his eyes to all I now tell him ?"

A sob was all the answer Anne could return.

"You will feel as I feel towards you," pursued the queen—"hatred towards her; but you will not have the consolations I enjoy. You will have merited your fate; and you will then think upon me and my woes, and will bitterly, but unavailingly, repent your conduct. And now, Henry," she exclaimed, turning solemnly to him, "you have pledged your royal word to me, and given me your hand upon it, that if you find this woman false to you, she shall expiate her offense on the block. I call upon you to ratify the pledge in her presence."

"I do so, Catherine," replied the king. "The mere suspicion of her guilt shall be enough."

"Henry!" exclaimed Anne.

"I have said it," replied the king.

"Tremble, then, Anne Boleyn!" cried Catherine, "tremble! and when you are adjudged to die the death of an adulteress, bethink you of the prediction of the queen you have injured. I may not live to witness your fate, but we shall meet before the throne of an eternal judge."

"Oh, Henry, this is too much!" gasped Anne. And she sank fainting into his arms.

"Begone!" cried the king, furiously. "You have killed her!"

"It were well for us both if I had done so," replied Catherine. "But she will recover to work my misery and her own. To your hands I commit her punishment. May God bless you, Henry!" With this she replaced her mask, and quitted the chapel.

Henry, meanwhile, anxious to avoid the comments of

his attendants, exerted himself to restore Anne Boleyn to sensibility, and his efforts were speedily successful.

"Is it, then, reality?" gasped Anne, as she gazed around. "I hoped it was a hideous dream. Oh, Henry, this has been frightful! But you will not kill me, as she predicted? Swear to me you will not!"

"Why should you be alarmed?" rejoined the king. "If you are faithful, you have nothing to fear."

"But you said suspicion, Henry—you said suspicion!" cried Anne.

"You must put the greater guard upon your conduct," rejoined the king, moodily. "I begin to think there is some truth in Catherine's insinuations."

"Oh! no; I swear to you there is not," said Anne—"I have trifled with the gallants of Francis's court, and have listened, perhaps too complacently, to the love-vows of Percy and Wyat, but when your majesty deigned to cast eyes upon me, all others vanished as the stars of night before the rising of the god of day. Henry, I love you deeply, devotedly—but Catherine's terrible imprecations make me feel more keenly than I have ever done before the extent of the wrong I am about to inflict upon her—and I fear that retributive punishment will follow it."

"You will do her no wrong," replied Henry. "I am satisfied of the justice of the divorce, and of its necessity; and if my purposed union with you were out of the question, I should demand it. Be the fault on my head."

"Your words restore me, in some measure, my liege," said Anne. "I love you too well not to risk body and soul for you; I am yours forever—ha!" she exclaimed, with a fearful look.

"What ails you, sweetheart?" exclaimed the king.

"I thought I saw a face at that window," she replied—"a black and hideous face like that of a fiend."

"It was mere fancy," replied the king. "Your mind is disturbed by what has occurred. You had better join your attendants, and retire to your own apartments."

"Oh, Henry!" cried Anne—"do not judge me unheard—do not believe what any false tongue may utter against me. I love only you—and can love only you. I would not wrong you, even in thought, for worlds."

"I believe you, sweetheart," replied the king, tenderly.

So saying, he led her down the aisle to her attendants. They then proceeded together to the royal lodgings, where Anne retired to her own apartments, and Henry withdrew to his private chamber.

CHAPTER II.

HOW HERNE THE HUNTER APPEARED TO HENRY ON THE TERRACE.

Henry again sat down to his despatches, and employed himself upon them to a late hour. At length, feeling heated and oppressed, he rose, and opened a window. As he did so, he was almost blinded by a vivid flash of forked lightning. Ever ready to court danger, and convinced, from the intense gloom without, that a fearful storm was coming on, Henry resolved to go forth to witness it. With this view, he quitted the closet, and passed through a small door opening upon the northern terrace. The castle clock tolled the hour of midnight, as he issued forth, and the darkness was so profound that he could scarcely see a foot before him. But he went on.

"Who goes there?" cried a voice, as he advanced, and a partisan was placed at his breast.

"The king!" replied Henry, in tones that would have left no doubt of the truth of the assertion, even if a gleam of lightning had not at the moment revealed his figure and countenance to the sentinel.

"I did not look for your majesty at such a time," replied the man, lowering his pike. "Has your majesty no apprehension of the storm? I have watched it gathering in the valley, and it will be a dreadful one. If I might make bold to counsel you, I would advise you to seek instant shelter in the castle."

"I have no fear, good fellow," laughed the king. "Get thee into yon porch, and leave the terrace to me. I will warn thee when I leave it."

As he spoke, a tremendous peal of thunder broke over-

head, and seemed to shake the strong pile to its foundations. Again the lightning rent the black canopy of heaven in various places, and shot down in forked flashes of the most dazzling brightness. A rack of clouds, heavily charged with electric fluid, hung right over the castle, and poured down all their fires upon it.

Henry placed slowly to and fro, utterly indifferent to the peril he ran—now watching the lightning as it shivered some oak in the Home Park—or lighted up the wide expanse of country around him—now listening to the roar of heaven's artillery, and he had just quitted the western extremity of the terrace, when the most terrific crash he had yet heard burst over him. The next instant, a dozen forked flashes shot from the sky, while fiery coruscations blazed athwart it; and at the same moment, a bolt struck the Wykeham Tower, beside which he had been recently standing. Startled by the appalling sound, he turned and beheld upon the battlemented parapet on his left, a tall ghostly figure, whose antlered helm told him it was Herne the hunter. Dilated against the flaming sky, the proportions of the demon seemed gigantic. His right hand was stretched forth towards the king, and in his left he held a rusty chain. Henry grasped the handle of his sword, and partly drew it, keeping his gaze fixed upon the figure.

"You thought you had got rid of me, Harry of England," cried Herne—"but were you to lay the weight of this vast fabric upon me, I would break from under it—ho! ho!"

"What wouldst thou, infernal spirit?" cried Henry.

"I am come to keep company with you, Harry," replied the demon; "this is a night when only you and I should be abroad. We know how to enjoy it. We like the music of the loud thunder, and the dance of the blithe lightning."

Startled by the sound, Henry turned and beheld on a parapet the tall ghastly figure of Herne the hunter. page 198.

—*Windsor Castle.*

"Avaunt, fiend!" cried Henry, "I will hold no converse with thee. Back to thy native hell!"

"You have no power over me, Harry," rejoined the demon, his words mingling with the rolling of the thunder, "for your thoughts are evil, and you are about to do an accursed deed. You cannot dismiss me. Before the commission of every great crime—and many great crimes you will commit—I will always appear to you. And my last appearance shall be three days before your end—ha! ha!"

"Darest thou say this to me?" cried Henry, furiously.

"I laugh at thy menaces," rejoined Herne, amid another peal of thunder—"but I have not yet done. Harry of England, your career shall be stained in blood. Your wrath shall descend upon the heads of those who love you, and your love shall be fatal. Better Anne Boleyn fled this castle, and sought shelter in the lowliest hovel in the land, than become your spouse. For you will slay her—and not her alone. Another shall fall by your hand; and so, if you had your own will, would all!"

"What meanest thou by all?" demanded the king.

"You will learn in due season," laughed the fiend. "But now mark me, Harry of England, thou fierce and bloody king!—thou shalt be drunken with the blood of thy wives; and thy end shall be a fearful one. Thou shalt linger out a living death—a mass of breathing corruption shalt thou become—and when dead, the very hounds with which thou huntedst me shall lick thy blood!"

These awful words, involving a fearful prophecy, which was afterwards, as will be shown, strangely fulfilled, were so mixed up with the rolling of the thunder, that Henry could scarcely distinguish one sound from the other. At the close of the latter speech, a flash of lightning of such dazzling brilliancy shot down past him, that he remained for some moments almost blinded; and when he recovered his powers of vision, the demon had vanished.

CHAPTER III.

HOW MABEL LYNDWOOD WAS TAKEN TO THE CASTLE BY NICHOLAS CLAMP; AND HOW THEY ENCOUNTERED MORGAN FENWOLF BY THE WAY.

The storm which had fallen so heavily on the castle had likewise visited the lake, and alarmed the inmates of the little dwelling on its banks. Both the forester and his granddaughter were roused from their beds, and they sat together in the chief apartment of the cottage, listening to the awful rolling of the thunder, and watching the blue flashing of the lightning. The storm was of unusually long duration, and continued for more than an hour with unintermitted violence. It then paused; the thunder rolled off, and the flashes of lightning grew fainter and less frequent. During the storm, Mabel continued on her knees, addressing the most earnest prayers to the Virgin for her preservation and that of her grandfather; but the old forester, though evidently much alarmed, uttered not a single supplication, but remained sitting in his chair with a sullen, scared look. As the thunder died away, he recovered his composure, and addressed himself to soothe the fears of his granddaughter. In this he had partially succeeded, and was urging her again to seek her couch, when the storm recommenced with fresh fury. Mabel once more fell on her knees, and the old man resumed his sullen posture. Another dreadful half-hour, marked by a succession of terrible peals and vivid flashes, succeeded, when, amidst an awful pause, Mabel ventured to address her old relative.

"Why do you not pray, grandfather?" she said, regarding him uneasily. "Sister Anastasia and good Father

Anselm always taught me to utter an Ave and cross myself during a thunder-storm. Why do you not pray, grandfather?"

"Do not trouble me," replied Tristram. "I have no fear."

"But your cheeks and lips are blanched," rejoined Mabel, "and I observed you shudder during that last awful crash. Pray, grandfather, pray!"

"Peace, wench, and mind your own business!" returned the old man angrily. "The storm will soon be over—it cannot last long in this way."

"The saints preserve us!" cried Mabel, as a tremendous concussion was heard overhead, followed by a strong sulphurous smell. "The cottage is struck!"

"It is—it is!" cried Tristram, springing to his feet, and rushing forth.

For a few minutes, Mabel continued in a state of stupefaction. She then staggered to the door, and beheld her grandfather occupied, with two dark figures, whom she recognized as Valentine Hagthorne and Morgan Fenwolf, in extinguishing the flames, which were bursting from the thatched roof of the hut. Surprise and terror held her silent; and the others were so busily engaged, that they did not notice her. At last, by their united efforts, the fire was got under without material damage to the little building, and Mabel retired, expecting her grandsire to return; but as he did not do so, and as almost instantly afterwards the plash of oars was heard on the lake, she flew to the window, and beheld him, by the gleam of the lightning, seated in the skiff with Morgan Fenwolf, while Valentine Hagthorne had mounted a black horse, and was galloping swiftly away. Mabel saw no more. Overcome by fright, she sank on the ground insensible. When she recovered, the storm had entirely ceased. A heavy shower had fallen, but the sky was now perfectly clear,

and day had begun to dawn. Mabel went to the door of the hut, and looked forth for her grandfather, but he was nowhere to be seen. She remained gazing at the now peaceful lake till the sun had fairly risen, when feeling more composed, she retired to rest, and sleep, which had been banished from them during the greater part of the night, now fell upon her lovely eyelids.

When she awoke, the day was far advanced, but still old Tristram had not returned; and with a heavy heart she set about her household concerns. The thought, however, of her anticipated visit to the castle speedily dispelled her anxiety, and she began to make preparations for setting out, attiring herself with unusual care. Bouchier had not experienced much difficulty in persuading her to obey the king's behest, and by his artful representations, he had likewise induced her grandfather to give his consent to the visit,—the old forester only stipulating that she should be escorted there and back by a falconer, named Nicholas Clamp, in whom he could put trust; to which proposition Bouchier readily assented.

At length, five o'clock, the appointed hour, arrived, and with it came Nicholas Clamp. He was a tall, middle-aged man, with yellow hair, clipped closely over his brows, and a beard and mustaches to match. His attire resembled that of a keeper of the forest, and consisted of a doublet and hose of green cloth; but he did not carry a bugle or hunting-knife. His sole weapon was a stout quarter-staff. After some little hesitation, Mabel consented to accompany the falconer, and they set forth together.

The evening was delightful, and their way through the woods was marked by numberless points of beauty. Mabel said little, for her thoughts were running upon her grandfather, and upon his prolonged and mysterious absence; but the falconer talked of the damage done by

the thunder-storm, which he declared was the most awful he had ever witnessed; and he pointed out to her several trees struck by the lightning. Proceeding in this way they gained a road leading from Blacknest, when, from behind a large oak, the trunk of which had concealed him from view, Morgan Fenwolf started forth, and planted himself in their path. The gear of the proscribed keeper was wild and ragged, his locks matted and disordered, his demeanor savage, and his whole appearance forbidding and alarming.

"I have been waiting for you for some time, Mabel Lyndwood," he said. "You must go with me to your grandfather."

"My grandfather would never send you for me," replied Mabel; "but if he did, I will not trust myself with you."

"The saints preserve us!" cried Nicholas Clamp. "Can I believe my eyes!—Do I behold Morgan Fenwolf!"

"Come with me, Mabel," cried Fenwolf, disregarding him.

But she returned a peremptory refusal.

"She shall not stir an inch!" cried the falconer. "It is thou, Morgan Fenwolf, who must go with me. Thou art a proscribed felon, and thy life is forfeit to the king. Yield thee, dog, as my prisoner!"

"Thy prisoner!" echoed Fenwolf, scornfully. "It would take three such as thou art to make me captive! Mabel Lyndwood, in your grandfather's name, I command you to come with me, and let Nick Clamp look to himself if he dares to hinder you."

"Nick will do something more than hinder her," rejoined the falconer, brandishing his staff, and rushing upon the other. "Felon hound! I command thee to yield!"

Before the falconer could reach him, Morgan Fenwolf plucked a long hunting-knife from his girdle, and made a

desperate stab at his assailant. But Clamp avoided the blow, and striking Fenwolf on the shins, immediately afterwards closed with him.

The result was still doubtful, when the struggle was suddenly interrupted by the trampling of horse approaching from the side of Windsor; and at the sound, Morgan Fenwolf disengaged himself from his antagonist, and plunged into the adjoining wood. The next moment, Captain Bouchier rode up, followed by a small band of halberdiers, and receiving information from the falconer of what had occurred, darted with his men into the wood in search of the fugitive. Nicholas Clamp and his companion did not await the issue of the search, but proceeded on their way.

As they walked at a brisk pace, they reached the long avenue in about half an hour, and took their way down it. When within a mile of the castle, they were overtaken by Bouchier and his followers, and the falconer was much disappointed to learn that they had failed in tracking Morgan Fenwolf to his lair. After addressing a few complimentary words to the maiden, Bouchier rode on.

Soon after this, the pair quitted the Great Park, and passing through a row of straggling houses, divided by gardens and closes, which skirted the foot of Castle Hill, presently reached the lower gate. They were admitted without difficulty; but just as they entered the lower ward, the falconer was hailed by Shoreditch and Paddington, who, at the moment, issued from the doorway of the guard-room.

Clamp obeyed the call, and went towards them; and it was evident, from the gestures of the archers, that they were making inquiries about Mabel, whose appearance seemed to interest them greatly. After a brief conversation with the falconer, they approached her, and respectfully addressing her, begged leave to attend her to the royal

lodgings, whither they understood she was going. No objection being made to the proposal by Mabel, the party directed their course towards the middle ward.

Passing through the gateway of the Norman Tower, they stopped before a low portal in a picturesque Gothic wing of the castle, with projecting walls and bay windows, which had been erected in the preceding reign of Henry the Seventh, and was, consequently, still in all its freshness and beauty.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW MABEL WAS RECEIVED BY THE PARTY IN THE KITCHEN; —AND OF THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE TWO JESTERS.

Addressing himself to a stout-built yeoman of the guard, who was standing within the doorway, Nicholas Clamp demanded admittance to the kitchen, and the man having detained them for a few moments, during which he regarded Mabel with a very offensive stare, ushered them into a small hall, and from thence into a narrow passage connected with it. Lighted by narrow loopholes, pierced through the walls, which were of immense thickness, this passage described the outer side of the whole upper quadrangle, and communicated with many other lateral passages and winding stairs leading to the chambers allotted to the household, or to the state apartments. Tracking it for some time, Nicholas Clamp, at length, turned off on the right, and crossing a sort of anteroom, led the way into a large chamber with stone walls and a coved and groined roof, lighted by a great window at the lower end This was the royal kitchen, and in it yawned no fewer than seven huge arched fireplaces in which fires were burning, and before which various goodly joints were being roasted, while a number of cooks and scullions were congregated round them. At a large table, in the center of the kitchen, were seated some half-dozen yeomen of the guard, together with the clerk of the kitchen, the chief bargeman, and the royal cutler, or blade-smith, as he was termed. These worthies were doing ample justice to a chine of beef, a wild boar pie, a couple of fat capons, a peacock pasty, a mess of pickled lobsters, and other excellent and

inviting dishes with which the board was loaded. Neither did they neglect to wash down the viands with copious draughts of ale and mead, from great pots and flagons placed beside them. Behind this party stood Giovanni Joungevello, an Italian minstrel, much in favor with Anne Boleyn, and Domingo Lamellino, or Lamelyn —as he was familiarly termed,—a Lombard, who pretended to some knowledge of chirurgery, astrology, and alchemy, and who was a constant attendant on Henry. At the head of the bench, on the right of the table, sat Will Sommers. The jester was not partaking of the repast, but was chatting with Simon Quanden, the chief cook, a good-humored personage, round-bellied as a tun, and blessed with a spouse, yclept Deborah, as fond of good cheer, as fat, and as good-humored as himself. Behind the cook stood the cellarman, known by the appellation of Jack of the Bottles, and at his feet were two playful little turnspits, with long backs, and short forelegs, as crooked almost as sickles.

On seeing Mabel, Will Sommers immediately arose, and advancing towards her with a mincing step, bowed with an air of mock ceremony, and said in an affected tone,—"Welcome, fair mistress, to the king's kitchen. We are all right glad to see you; are we not, mates?"

"Ay, that we are!" replied a chorus of voices.

"By my troth, the wench is wondrously beautiful!" said Kit Coo, one of the yeomen of the guard.

"No wonder the king is smitten with her!" said Launcelot Rutter, the blade-smith; "her eyes shine like a dagger's point."

"And she carries herself like a wafter on the river," said the bargeman.

"Her complexion is as good as if I had given her some of my sovereign balsam of beauty," said Domingo Lamelyn.

"Much better," observed Joungevello, the minstrel; "I shall write a canzonet in her praise, and sing it before the king."

"And get flouted for thy pains by the Lady Anne," said Kit Coo.

"The damsel is not so comely as I expected to find her," observed Amice Lovekyn, one of the serving women, to Hector Cutbeard, the clerk of the kitchen.

"Why, if you come to that, she is not to be compared to you, pretty Amice!" said Cutbeard, who was a red-nosed, red-faced fellow, with a twinkling merry eye.

"Nay, I meant not that," replied Amice, retreating.

"Excuse my getting up to receive you, fair mistress," cried Simon Quanden, who seemed fixed to his chair; "I have been bustling about all day, and am sore fatigued—sore fatigued. But will you not take something? A sugared cate, and a glass of hypocras jelly—or a slice of capon. Go to the damsel, dame, and prevail on her to eat."

"That will I," replied Deborah. "What shall it be, sweetheart? We have a well-stored larder here. You have only to ask and have."

"I thank you, but I am in want of nothing," replied Mabel.

"Nay, that is against all rule, sweetheart," said Deborah; "no one enters the king's kitchen without tasting his royal cheer."

"I am sorry I must prove an exception, then," returned Mabel, smiling; "for I have no appetite."

"Well, well, I will not force you to eat against your will," replied the good dame. "But a cup of wine will do you good after your walk."

"I will wait upon her," said the Duke of Shoreditch, who vied with Paddington and Nick Clamp in attention to the damsel.

"Let me pray you to cast your eyes upon these two dogs, fair Mabel," said Will Sommers, pointing to the two turnspits; "they are special favorites of the king's highness. They are much attached to the cook, their master; but their chief love is towards each other, and nothing can keep them apart."

"Will Sommers speaks the truth," rejoined Simon Quanden. "Hob and Nob, for so they are named, are fast friends. When Hob gets into the box to turn the spit, Nob will watch beside it till his brother is tired, and then he will take his place. They always eat out of the same platter, and drink out of the same cup. I once separated them for a few hours to see what would happen, but they howled so piteously, that I was forced to bring them together again. It would have done your heart good to witness their meeting, and to see how they leaped and rolled with delight! Here, Hob," he added, taking a cake from his apron pocket, "divide this with thy brother."

Placing his paws on his master's knees, the nearest turnspit took the cake in his mouth, and proceeding towards Nob, broke it into two pieces, and pushed the larger portion towards him.

While Mabel was admiring this display of sagacity and affection, a bustling step was heard behind her, and turning, she beheld a strange figure, in a particolored gown and hose, with a fool's cap and bells on his head, whom she immediately recognized as the cardinal's jester, Patch. The newcomer recognized her too; stared in astonishment; and gave a leering look at Will Sommers.

"What brings you here, gossip Patch?" cried Will Sommers.—"I thought you were in attendance upon your master, at the court at Blackfriars."

"So I have been," replied Patch—"and I am only just arrived with his grace."

"What! is the decision pronounced?" cried Will Sommers, eagerly. "Is the queen divorced? Is the king single again? Let us hear the sentence."

"Ay, the sentence!—the sentence!" resounded on all hands.

Stimulated by curiosity, the whole of the party rose from the table; Simon Quanden got out of his chair; the other cooks left their joints to scorch at the fire; the scullions suspended their work; and Hob and Nob fixed their large inquiring black eyes upon the jester.

"I never talk thirsting," said Patch, marching to the table, and filling himself a flagon of mead. "Here's to you, fair maiden," he added, kissing the cup to Mabel, and swallowing its contents at a draught. "And now be seated, my masters, and you shall hear all I have to relate, and it will be told in a few words. The court is adjourned for three days,—Queen Catherine having demanded that time to prepare her allegations, and the delay has been granted her."

"Pest on it!—the delay is some trick of your crafty and double-dealing master," cried Will Sommers. "Were I the king, I know how I would deal with him."

"What wouldst thou do, thou scurril knave?" cried Patch, angrily.

"I would strip him of his ill-gotten wealth, and leave him only thee—a fitting attendant—of all his thousand servitors," replied Will.

"This shall to his grace's ears," screamed Patch, amid the laughter of the company,—"and see whether your back does not smart for it."

"I fear him not," replied Will Sommers. "I have not yet told the king my master of the rare wine we found in his cellar."

"What wine was that, Will?" cried Jack of the Bottles.

Will plucked Patch's cap from his head and, pointing to it, cried, "Here is an emblem of the Cardinal of York. Page 211.

—*Windsor Castle.*

"You shall hear," replied Will Sommers, enjoying the disconcerted look of the other jester. "I was at the palace at Hampton, when this scant-witted knave invited me to taste some of his master's wine, and accordingly to the cellar we went.—'This wine will surprise you,' quoth he, as we broached the first hogshead. And truly it did surprise me, for no wine followed the gimlet. So we went on to another, and another, and another, till we had tried half a score of them, and all with the same result. Upon this, I seized a hammer which was lying by, and sounded the casks, but none of them seeming empty, I at last broke the lid of one—and what do you think it contained?"

A variety of responses were returned by the laughing assemblage, during which Patch sought to impose silence upon his opponent. But Will Sommers was not to be checked.

"It contained neither vinegar, nor oil, nor lead," he said, "but gold. Ay, solid bars of gold—ingots. Every hogshead was worth ten thousand pounds, and more."

"Credit him not, my masters," cried Patch, amid the roars of the company; "the whole is a mere fable—an invention. His grace has no such treasure. The truth is, Will Sommers got drunk upon some choice Malmsey, and then dreamed he had been broaching casks of gold."

"It is no fable, as you and your master will find, when the king comes to sift the matter," replied Will. "This will be a richer result to him than was ever produced by your alchemical experiments, good Signor Domingo Lamelyn."

"It is false! I say, false!" screamed Patch. "Let the cellars be searched, and I will stake my head nothing is found."

"Stake thy cap, and there may be some meaning in it," said Will, plucking Patch's cap from his head, and

elevating it on his truncheon—" here is an emblem of the Cardinal of York," he cried, pointing to it.

A roar of laughter from the company followed this sally, and Hob and Nob looked up in placid wonderment.

" I shall die with laughing," cried Simon Quanden, holding his fat sides, and addressing his spouse, who was leaning upon his shoulder.

In the meantime, Patch sprang to his feet, and gesticulating with rage and fury, cried, " Thou hast done well to steal my cap and bells, for they belong of right to thee. Add my folly to thy own, and thou wilt be a fitting servant to thy master; or e'en give him the cap, and then there will be a pair of ye."

" Who is the fool now, I should like to know?" rejoined Will Sommers, gravely. "I call you all to witness that he has spoken treason."

While this was passing, Shoreditch had advanced with a flagon of Malmsey to Mabel, but she was so interested in the quarrel between the two jesters, that she heeded him not; neither did she attend to Nicholas Clamp, who was trying to explain to her what was going forward.

But just as Patch's indiscreet speech was uttered, an usher entered the kitchen, and announced the approach of the king.

END OF VOLUME ONE.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Form L9-17m-8,'55 (B3339s4) 444

PR
4002
A1
v.7

Ainsworth -
The works

BINDERY NOV 20 1957

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 000 369 304 1

PR
4002
A1
v.7